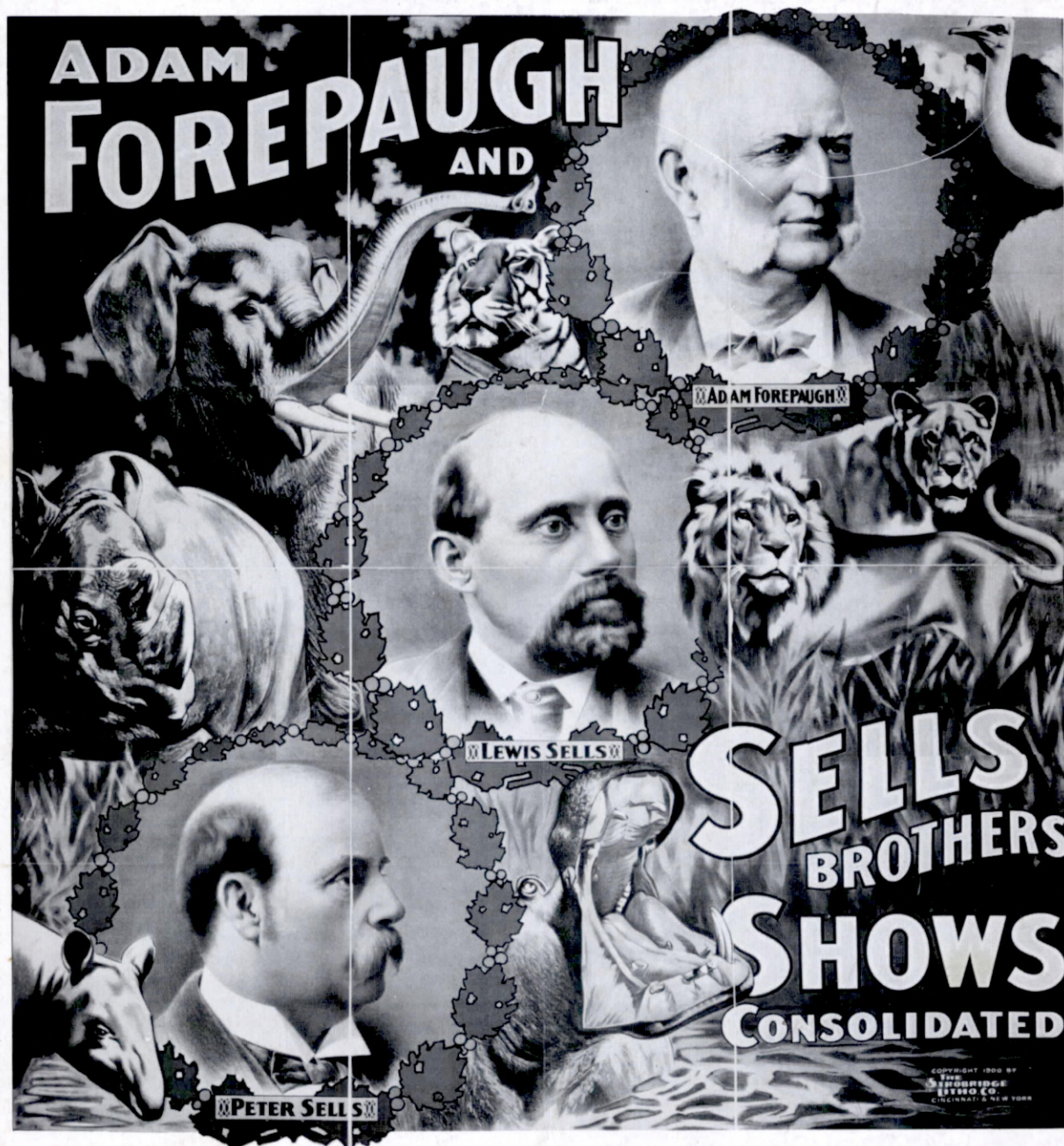


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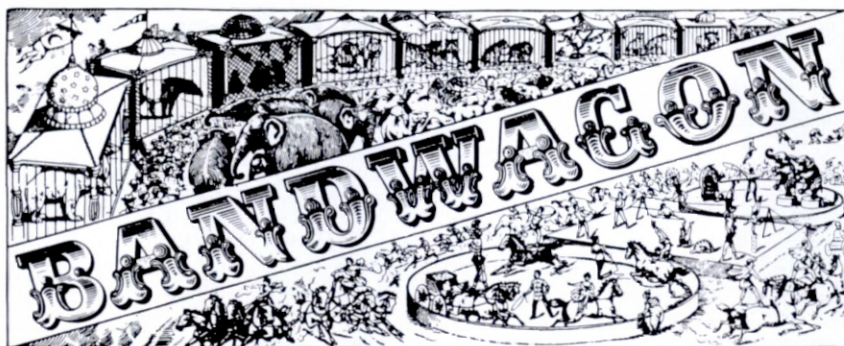
# BANDWAGON

JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1985





## THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 29, No. 1

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1985

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor and Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

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### THIS MONTH'S COVER

This Forepaugh Sells six sheet dates from 1900. At the time, the show was equally owned by James A. Bailey, W. W. Cole, Lewis Sells, and Peter Sells. Opening in Madison Square Garden on April 4, the show played the mid-Atlantic and New England states in May and June, moving into western New York state and the Midwest by mid-June. The plains states were toured during July, August and early September with the remainder of the route in the southern states. It was a successful season, returning over \$100,000 in profits to the owners.

This bill was executed by the Strobridge Lithograph Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, and showcases that firm's technical superiority to other show printers. Portrait bills such as this were common during that period, and perhaps reflected the public's desire to know who was dispensing their amusement. That Forepaugh's image was

still used ten years after his death, and that Bailey felt no need to put his own name or Cole's on the advertising was tribute to the power of the old Dutchman's reputation. The next year, however, posters indicated who the four owners were. Original lithograph in the collection of the Library of Congress.

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### 1985 CHS Convention

Arrangements for the 1985 Circus Historical Society convention are nearly completed for June 20-23 in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The convention hotel will be the Pittsfield Hilton, and Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros., the convention circus, will be set up directly across the street from the hotel on June 20-21. Pittsfield is best served by the Albany, New York airport.

Historical papers, special displays of rare circusiana from the 1800s, vintage films (including a newly discovered, professionally made twelve minute film of Clyde Beatty's entire act in 1941), and the third annual gala benefit auction will all highlight the 1985 gathering.

While additional details and information will appear in the next issue of *Bandwagon*, those wishing early registration materials should write Richard W. Flint, 3751 Beech Ave., Baltimore, Maryland 21211. This material will be sent about April 15. Plan now to attend what has become an increasingly popular event for the circus enthusiast.

### PERU MUSEUM SIGNS OPTION ON CIRCUS HALL OF FAME

The International Circus Museum Inc. of Peru, Indiana has signed an option to purchase the Circus Hall of Fame from CHS member John Zweifel of Orlando, Florida. A public meeting was held in Peru on November 27 as a kick-off fund raiser, and to display an architectural drawing of the new museum and facility. Those wishing more information on the museum are encouraged to contact Garret Palmer, President of International Circus Museum Board of Directors, 2½ N. Broadway, Peru, Indiana 46970.

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND  
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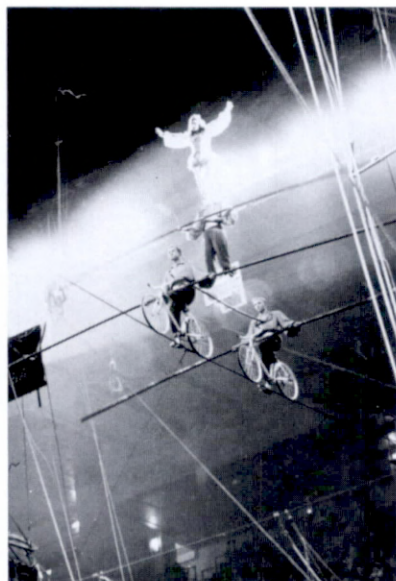
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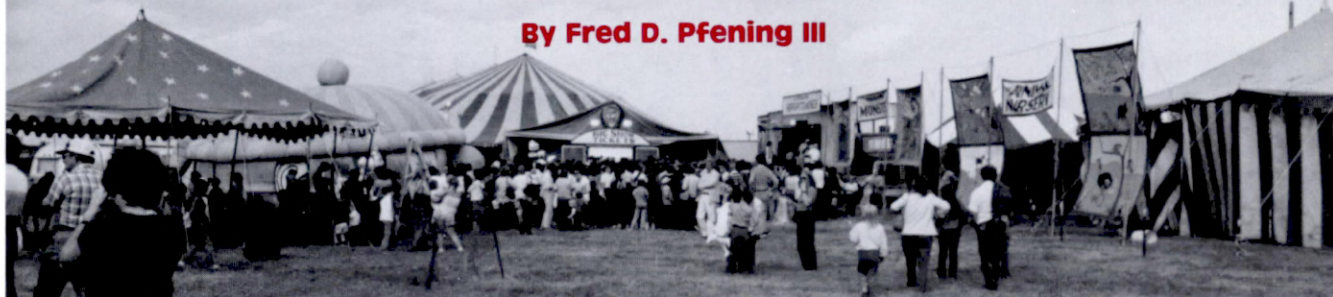
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# The Circus Year in Review

## 1984 Season

By Fred D. Pfening III



Front yard of the new Toby Tyler Circus. The kiddie rides are on the left, and the menagerie on the right. L. A. Sadler photo.

This will be remembered as the year Irvin Feld died. Charles Ringling's death in 1926, and James A. Bailey's in 1906 were the only two other occasions in this century when the industry's leading player passed from the scene while still at the top of his game. Feld left a remarkable legacy of two circuses, two ice shows, a Las Vegas magic revue, a Broadway production, and an amusement park. He also left a noble failure called the Monte Carlo Circus which may endear him to historians as much as his more successful ventures. While he was supported by a very capable staff headed by his son Kenneth, his individual contribution to the circus business was immense, and his genius for promotion and organization was in large part responsible for the general revival the entire industry has experienced in the seventeen years since he and his partners bought the Ringling-Barnum Circus from the North brothers.

Financially, the season was only fair. In spite of a robust economy, much of live show business was down. Touring rock and roll was off, and sometimes badly so; Broadway in the hinter lands was weak as were family arena shows. While some of the troupes which performed on sawdust had great years, others did only so-so, and still others closed early. The increased number of rumors that specific outfits were not going out again was an indication that many a show had a tough year. Those companies which prospered did so by concentrating on the basics of a strong advance, and a creditable performance. The old saw about election years hurting circuses did not seem to have been a factor; in fact, not a single circusman expressed concern about the campaign, although at least one carnival owner did.

Pressure from so-called animal protection groups continued to vex shows. An organization called the International Primate Protection League raised a terrible stink when it learned that Mickey Antalek's chimps had gone to a laboratory in New Mexico after the

Ringling trainer's sudden death in August. Various groups constantly scrutinized shows to make sure they were in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and other animal protection legislation. When a violation was found, they quickly alerted authorities. They also lobbied state law makers to pass what they perceived as pro-animal legislation. A law proposed in Ohio, for example, would prohibit anyone from owning exotic animals, and prohibit the transportation of such animals into the state. While this bill failed, its passage obviously would have a chilling effect on circus in Ohio. The Department of Agriculture appears to have been more vigilant than in the past in enforcing laws. While the USDA seemed to have hammered particularly on the private wildlife parks, one report had

Ward Hall turns a tip in front of the kid show on Roller Bros. Circus. Hall and his sideshow started the year with Vargas, but jumped to Roller after being unable to set up on Vargas' tight shopping mall lots. Fred D. Pfening Jr. photo.



their agents visiting at least one troupe and photographing every animal. While the overwhelming majority of shows and showmen made every effort to meet government standards, this problem showed no signs of being resolved in the near future.

Another serious threat to the industry was the spate of anti-phone promotion sentiment in many states. Other states seemed to find an increased number of violations of existing laws. A muckraking article in the *Seattle Times* cited the case of one boiler room operator who sold over \$17,000 worth of circus tickets by stating the proceeds would go to charity; only \$1000 was given to two civic agencies. Similar heat surfaced in New York and New Jersey, and the problem was considered severe enough in Massachusetts that there were calls to completely ban phone promotion. While the Massachusetts solution was obviously an over reaction, clearly some abuses of phone solicitation laws did occur, and the issue continued to be a challenge which the entire circus business had to face. If any state were to ban phone rooms, it would effectively bar many circuses from playing inside its borders. Some shows played an increased number of successful unspon-



sored dates, perhaps finding that phone promotion may not have been the life blood they once thought it was.

A third area of concern was the unfair and unethical treatment of sponsors by a small minority of shows. After it was too late, a number of service clubs, particularly those in rural America, discovered that they had gotten a short count on tickets, found that their expenses were higher than first believed, or cheated in any of a number of scams which left them with an unfavorable opinion of the offending circus in particular and the industry in general. One medium size tenter was notorious in dealing with sponsors, going so far as to collect advance money for a date, then not appear. Another showman, this one a square operator, commented that he wasn't going to try to book a particularly badly burned area because of the heat created by this rival troupe.

Two of the three big tenters had fine years. The Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. aggregation had the biggest gross in its history, a tribute to John Pugh's show smarts and Doug Holwadel's business acumen. The troupe occupied a new office in De Land, Florida which included its own in-house print shop, making it possible for the show to do almost all of its own printing. Only the lithos and roll tickets are done on the outside. The upgrading of the equipment, which began immediately after Pugh and Holwadel took over two years ago, continued as three new diesel tractors were added, giving the show probably the finest physical plant in the industry. The season's total repair bill of less than \$1000 proved the efficacy of the move.

Opening in De Land in mid-March the troupe had an excellent spring in spite of the rainy weather; in fact, only three performances were lost to the weather in a 234 day season. Beatty-Cole had a strong front end with twelve marketing and contracting people, and a five person bill crew which traveled about two weeks ahead of the show. Great attention was paid to the route, especially to the cost saving engendered by staying in the highly populated areas along the eastern seaboard, and New England. The show traveled a little over 9000 miles during the season, closing at Boca Raton, Florida on November 4. The season's mileage was only a fraction of the distance traveled by high grass competitors such as Carson and Barnes which added over 16,000 miles to each odometer during the year.

A number of weak sponsors were dropped, resulting in an increased number of unsponsored dates. Thirty percent of the route was cold turkeyed, a remarkable figure for a major contemporary circus. One cold date, at economically depressed New Bedford, Massachusetts, gave the show three days of capacity crowds at the end of June, which spoke to the possibilities of old time promotion. The show also had



The elephant ride was alive and well in 1984 as Buckles Woodcock shows here at the Detroit Shrine Circus. John Polacsek photo.

about a dozen buy-outs in which a sponsor, often a charitable or cultural institution, purchased the entire date.

One of the season's more interesting engagements was a four day stand at Beech Mountain, North Carolina over the Labor Day weekend when a ski resort bought out the show as a promotion. The equipment had to be towed up a 5200' mountain to be set up, and special trucks were hired to pull it up the hill as the road was too steep for the show semis. It took all day to get the entire circus up the grade. Police were stationed at each curve in the road as the hired trucks couldn't negotiate the turns and remain on their side of the road. The elephants walked the course.

At the resort the show was laid out on

Shrine Circus impresario Tommy Hanneford and his mother, ninety-five year old Katherine Hanneford. John Polacsek photo.



three levels: the top level was for the elephants, cook house and mechanic's department; the middle for a big top and front yard; and the bottom for the house trailers and the lion truck and tents. The shifting dens overturned while being moved between levels allowing the cats to escape. One escapee was safely maneuvered into lion trainer Dave Hoover's car. In all, eight wagons had to be repaired and the cats got the rest of the day off. It was some of the roughest tramping many of the performers had ever experienced.

The exhibition was similar to that of past years. New on the bill were a bare-back riding act, a high school horse act, and an aerial act. Clark Weigle led an eight piece band that played many of the traditional circus favorites, and was less dependent on taped music than in the past. The show performed under the Leaf canvas tent which opened and closed in one at Nashville in 1983. The program and advertising stressed the 100th anniversary of the show which traced its roots back to the 1884 W.W. Cole Circus. As far as is known, no CHS member was involved in that historical exercise.

Early on Sunday morning, July 29 six of Fred Logan's elephants charged down Wall Street in New York City as part of a commercial for a computer product. Besides Logan's herd were the five Diano elephants, and four owned by Rex Williams. About half the animals had to go into make-up for the ad as fake African elephant ears were affixed to the Asian bulls. In another elephant note, uptown elephants races were an integral part of show day publicity.

Beatty-Cole had more than its share of hassles with animal rights groups. In Sagville, Long Island in late July, Dave Hoover could not work his cats because of a local ordinance banning the exhibit of exotic animals. A much worse situation occurred on August 11 when New Jersey animal control officials impounded the show's felines for about twenty hours, stopping the cat truck enroute from Burlington Center, New Jersey to Wilmington, Delaware. State SPCA officials claimed that the circus failed to properly ventilate the cages as they had been asked to do two days earlier. Four circus employees were arrested, charged with improper transportation of animals and being disorderly, but were released on bond. Show officials said they were being harassed. The vents were enlarged after which the lions and tigers were returned to the show, but not before the circus received some unfavorable and unfair press.

D. R. Miller celebrated his 50th wedding anniversary and his 48th season as a circus owner in 1984. His circus, Carson and Barnes, had a very good year, reportedly one of the best in its history. Opening in Paris, Texas on a cold, rainy March 17, the show entered California in mid-April for about three





weeks. The California tour was shorter than last year's, and the troupe didn't go into Oregon or Washington. The big top had to be dropped to avoid a hail storm at Hayes, Kansas on June 21, and four days later it was blown down at LaJunta, Colorado. The summer months were spent in the Midwest, with the trucks heading south in early October. The big Labor Day date in Tallmadge, Ohio was repeated, and the show participated in a parade in Richmond, Indiana on September 16. When it closed in Commerce, Texas on November 4, the circus had exhibited in twenty states with the twenty-one days spent in both California and Texas the record for any one state. While the two other big tenters, Beatty-Cole and Vargas, played numerous multiple day stands, Carson and Barnes remained the last of the large one nighters as virtually every town on its route was played for only one day.

Transported on thirty-nine show-owned semis, the outfit was physically little different from last year, the only addition being an old Kelly-Miller ticket wagon which was pulled by a six horse draft hitch acquired from the Lloyd Jentis estate. It was used as an uptown bally. The performance was likewise similar to past seasons with the notable exception that four flying acts were featured. This was a first for a truck opera, and the first time any American circus had four trapeze acts since Ringling-Barnum in 1947. Some sort of record must have been set at Troy, Ohio on September 14 when all four acts

**The Kelly-Miller Circus' midway included a pit show with a live "unicorn," bringing to mind that George Christy once had "Baby Pterodactyl" painted on the side of one of his animal cages. Note fancy entrance to sideshow and menagerie. David Reddy photo.**

caught the triple in the same performance.

The show had a first class menagerie, a Miller trademark. It included twenty-three Asian elephants, four African elephants, a rhino, a hippo, over fifty horses and ponies, four llamas, four camels, two zebras, and two giraffes. The giraffes, named Dory and Isla after the Millers, were the first tandem on an American circus since Ringling-Barnum in 1955, and the first pair ever on a motorized show. Unfortunately, the female died in Russellville, Alabama on October 15.

James Judkins, the general manager, edited an exceptionally fine route book soon after the season ended. Full of photos and information, it recalled the Beatty-Cole books of the early 1960s as it was one of the very few books which published a day by day diary, a feature usually absent in recent offerings.

Although the season began benignly in the West, Circus Vargas had a rough year. After laying off for a few weeks at the National Orange Show grounds in

**The Oscanian Bros. Circus had some colorfully painted equipment including the bus on the right which was converted into a combination office and ticket wagon. Joe Bradbury photo.**



San Bernardino, California, the show opened in Yuma, Arizona on January 18. It soon moved into the San Diego area, and then from February through May made its annual assault on the huge Los Angeles and San Francisco metropolitan areas, advertising heavily on radio and TV, with window cards, and in newspapers. Playing many shopping malls, the show made extensive use of merchant tickets, often tying in with national companies such as Wendy's and Kroger's. The show had a clever promotion in the San Diego area where a radio station conducted a contest in which the winner was allowed to send an "elegram," — a telegram attached to the side of one of the Vargas bulls. Person calling the station with best elephant joke was the winner.

The show was very similar to 1983 with the exception of Rex Williams and his animals absence which left the troupe with nine elephants, one of which was from Africa. Also gone were Semon's chimps, and Les Victoria, a living statue act. Features included David Polk and twelve tigers, Benny Williams and Anna May the elephant, and Dale Longmire doing a new illusion act in the center ring. Ted Polk was in charge of the elephants, replacing Williams. Wally Naghtin's bear act was expanded to fill all three rings with fifteen bears. One of Naghtin's bears appeared in the film Hotel New Hampshire, which was enough to dub the beast "Robin the Movie Bear" and charge towners to have their picture taken with him. The canned music, which started the previous year, was continued, and the show used last season's Italian tent for the two hour performance.

Ward Hall started off as the concert feature with a twenty minute performance which included a rubber girl, fire eater, sword swallower, dwarf, iron tongue man, and tattooed lady. The aftershow concept didn't work, and Hall soon had his ten-in-one in a tent on the midway. After being unable to set up his show on tight shopping mall lots, Hall gave up the ghost after about six weeks, and left Vargas. The midway also had an elephant ride, pony sweep, moon bounce, and bear photo stand. The menagerie was displayed in the open next to the big top.

Vargas made some gigantic jumps. After playing Albuquerque, New Mexico on May 18-22, the show traveled 1240 miles, landing in Bloomington, Illinois on May 25-27. It then moved to Peoria for three days, and then into the Chicago area for a May 31-July 16 series of dates at shopping centers.

Apparently business in the Chicago area and subsequent dates in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota was bad as horror stories began surfacing in late August and early September, some falsely claiming that the show had closed. Another unconfirmed rumor had owner Cliff Vargas quite ill.

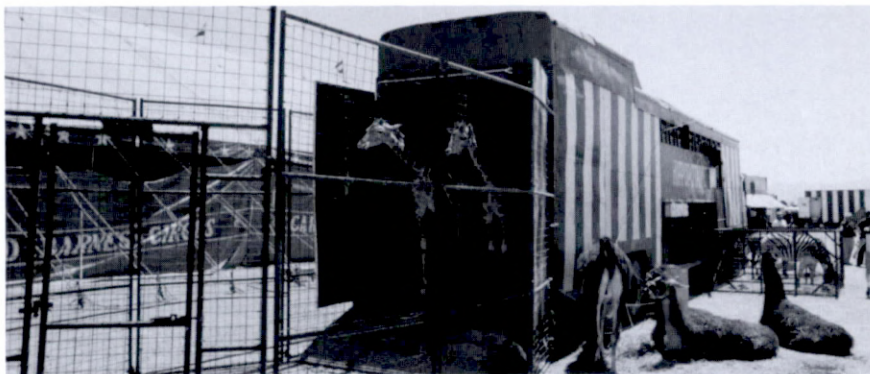


Salaries, however, apparently were cut from late August or early September until at least mid-October with one report stating that nothing was paid one week in early October. Many acts left the show during this period including Benny Williams, the teeterboard act, and Wally Eastwood, all of which greatly cut down the performance. Nevertheless the show hobbled southwest through Texas, and New Mexico in October, and Nevada and California in November, closing in Bakersfield on November 25.

John "Gopher" Davenport's Ford Bros. Circus was an animal aggregation second only to Carson and Barnes as the show was reported carrying between twelve and eighteen elephants, a hippo, a giraffe, a camel, five llamas, eight goats, numerous lions and tigers, thirty-seven dogs, fifteen horses and ponies, five bears, six zebras, an orangutan, and many other animals and birds. An October report had a rhino and some other animals being purchased. Some of the elephants raced up-town early on show day as a promotion. In June, Davenport augmented the races with a team of draft horses pulling a bally wagon. An air calliope also gave concerts before and after performances, a nice-old-time touch.

The midway included a petting zoo, moon bounce, pony sweep, elephant ride, giant ape pit show, snake show, and concession trailer. The tent was about 110 foot by 210 foot, and was the same one used last season. An organ and drums backed up the performance which, as would be expected, was heavy on animal acts with Bobby and Rosa Gibbs working many of them. The program changed a great deal during the year as a number of acts left and new ones joined. The show traveled behind eleven or twelve steering wheels and included about six large semis, and a sleeper bus, none of which were lettered or numbered, an unfortunate aspect of modern circus.

Ford Bros., the second biggest thing to move every night, played a high grass route. It opened in Conroe, Texas on February 29 and by May got as far east as Illinois. The rest of the summer and early fall were spent in familiar territory in the upper Midwest, plains states, and Pacific Northwest. The tour closed back in Texas in early November; about two weeks later a smaller Christmas unit began an approximately twenty day tour of Texas shopping malls. In mid-May the show split, and brother Charles "Termite" Davenport took the smaller unit to Alaska and the Canadian Northwest Territories as Dailey Bros, a title used forty years ago by the Davenports' step-father. Dailey used a 60 foot by 120 foot tent with three 30 foot middle sections. It seated about 1300. The troupe had one elephant, and its midway included a snake show, pony sweep, and an elephant



**The Carson and Barnes Circus featured two giraffes in the menagerie, a truck show first. Jerry Cash photo.**

ride. Dailey spent at least mid-June through early August in Alaska and the Northwest Territories, and apparently played a route in the continental United States after their return as they were in Texas in November. By then, the show's elephant population had doubled.

At Peshtigo, Wisconsin in June, Gopher Davenport was attacked by one of the cats while subbing for regular lion trainer Mike Cecere. Bobby Gibbs shot mace at the cats as Davenport regained control of the situation; even so, he required stitches to close a bite on his shoulder and scratches on his arms. Earlier that day, high winds caused a flag pole to come out of its socket on the big top, striking a young woman and young girl. The woman suffered a broken shoulder and girl received a head laceration. On July 16 an elephant handler was killed by one of his charges in Cheney, Washington. The murderer was a small African bull named Jo Jo who was quickly exiled to a wildlife park.

Al G. Kelly and Miller Bros., a venerable truck show title if there ever was one, was revived under the ownership of David and Carole Rawls, Jess and Loraine Jessen, D.R. Miller, Geary

**The Ford Bros. Circus at Colby, Kansas on October 2. The show played a high grass route using a large tent, and unlettered trucks. Joe Fleming photo.**



Bryd, and Tom Inabinette. David Rawls was the manager. Equipment came from the defunct John Strong Circus which was purchased by the Dory Miller interests in 1983, and was augmented by ex-Carson and Barnes material. This outfit traveled on approximately four show-owned trucks, and the performance was given under a blue Italian 90 foot round top with two 30s and one 40s middles.

The show opened in the winter quarters town of Hugo, Oklahoma on April 14, and had an approximately twenty-eight week season through the Southeast, and Midwest with a large number of dates in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. Two elephants were carried; Tena, a former John Strong bull, and Amy from Carson and Barnes. Later in the year only one elephant was used. The midway had a moon bounce, snake show, combination ticket wagon-concession stand, pony sweep novelty stand, elephant ride, and unicorn show. The latter was a goat whose horns had been tied together since birth. Unicorns are to be the feature of the 1985 Ringling Red unit, and there is no record of the Big One's reaction upon learning that Kelly-Miller trumped them by a year. Midway also had a kid show in a 50 foot top with two 20 foot centers. Side show included a snake charmer, fire eater, contortionist, fish girl, Coo Coo the feathered lady, and the petting zoo.

The performance lasted about two hours and included pony and dog acts as well as the usual aerial and juggling turns. An organ and drum back them



up. The season exceeded expectations, and Kelly-Miller will definitely return in 1985.

Wayne Franzen's Franzen Bros. Circus opened its eleventh season in early March in Florida, and then headed into Alabama and Georgia. April and May were spent in the Carolinas and the Virginias, and July and August in the Midwest with almost all of August in Michigan. A few September dates in Iowa were the last known ones until the closing stand at Wimauma, Florida on December 5. The show had a blowdown at Strasburg, Virginia on May 8; they blue skyed it for a few days afterwards until the tent could be repaired. Baraboo, Wisconsin was played as a prelude to the July 7 circus parade; the Ringling Centennial Association was the sponsor. In Mason City, Iowa they were under the auspices of the local Shrine temple, the first time that organization had sponsored a tenter.

Franzen has developed an enviable reputation for square dealing with sponsors and for giving patrons value for their dollar. Part of the reason for this happy state of affairs has been his policy of plowing money back into the show each year, and 1984 was no exception. Two baby African elephants, two seat wagons, a 90 foot by 50 foot big top, a 60 foot by 40 foot menagerie top, a marquee, and pony sweep top were new, all of which was a sizeable capital investment.

The performance was a one ring affair highlighted by Wayne Franzen's cat, elephant and Appaloosa horse acts, and was very pleasing to the small town audiences which made up the backbone of the show's route. A three piece band provided the music. The midway featured a pony sweep, and petting zoo, but no moon bounce, or pit attraction. The equipment was carried behind ten steering wheels.

The Big Apple Circus, the Masterpiece Theater of the sawdust universe, had its longest tour ever. Opening in Brooklyn on April 21 and show played fifteen dates before closing in Hanover, New Hampshire on August 13. The stand in Hartford, Connecticut was the first for any tented circus since the Ringling show burned there in 1944. As a result of that tragedy, Connecticut has the nation's strongest fire safety laws for tent shows. Local firemen must be on duty on the lot, and the use of flaming hoops or gas engines in the performance is prohibited. While the performance took place under the same Italian big top used in past seasons, the front yard was augmented by the acquisition of some of the fine equipment from Canada's Circus Tivoli including a double truck marquee entrance, a concession trailer, a power plant, a carpeted donnicker, and an office wagon.

Big Apple's summer performance was a wonder to behold, partially be-



**Franzen Bros. had some circusy-looking rolling stock. The show used a white motif. Fred D. Pfening Jr. photo.**

cause it revived such ancient features as talking clowns, the drunk elephant routine, and the butterfly cloud swing. Music written especially for the acts by a member of the band was another remarkable aspect of this aggregation. Original circus music had not been written for perhaps fifty years. The one ring, round top tent gave the show an intimacy lost in more spacious pavillions.

Its fourth annual under-canvas winter date at Lincoln Center in New York City ran from late November until New Year's Day, and included more arenic talent under one tent than had been seen in many years, at least since Ringling went into auditoriums. The performance included summer show veterans Katja Schumann and her horses, James Zoppe and the Big Apple rosinback riders, the Woodcock elephants, the Tito Gaona flying act, and three clowns who were actually funny to both children and their parents. Ex-Ringling stars Dolly Jacobs and the Carillo brothers were brought in for the date, as was Roby Gasser whose sea lion act was the finest anyone had ever seen. It was about as near perfection as a performance could be; the only thing missing was a cat act.

Roller Bros. had a hard luck year. On

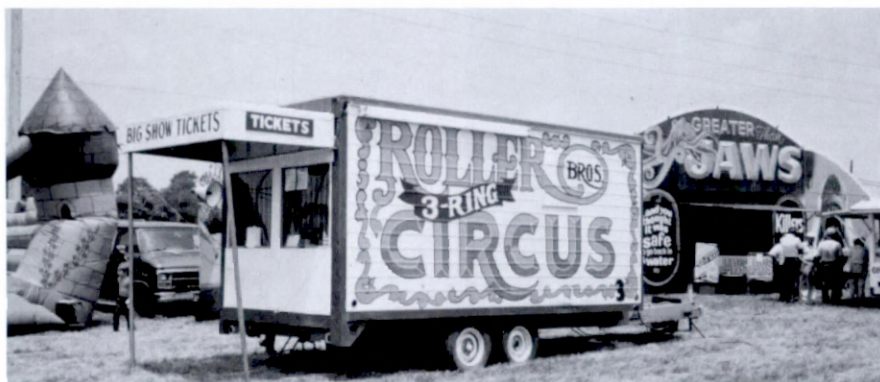
**The Big Apple Circus bought this fancy ticket wagon and front marquee. Notice that the Tivoli name remained on trailer on right. Bob Kitchen photo.**



April 17, three days after opening in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, an elephant handler and the show's one bull, named Ellie and leased from D.R. Miller, were electrocuted when a pole they were moving touched a high power line as the show was setting up. Miller later provided a replacement elephant from Kelly-Miller Circus. In June, the killer shark show was destroyed when a fire gutted its trailer, and in early July a fire broke out in the cab which pulled the animal trailer. Show personnel had the presence of mind to hail a passing tractor, and induced the driver to pull the van off the cab's 5th wheel, thus saving the animals.

The show didn't publish its route, and as a result the itinerary remained a mystery. It did have some Texas dates in April, and was in the Midwest during the summer with no record after some early August stands in Michigan. Roller had the same Bruno tent as in 1983, but did use a new concession trailer, and a new office wagon off Carson and Barnes. The midway had a shark show, a snake show, concessions, moon bounce, a pony sweep. The second elephant was apparently a runner which precluded an elephant ride. Dominating the midway was Ward Hall's ten-in-one which came over from Vargas a few days into the season. Hall looked like the reincarnation of Doc Oyler when he turned the tip in front of his beautifully painted banner line. Kid show turns included a knife throwing act, magic, vent, midget strong man, an electric girl, blade box, and, as a blow off for a quarter more, a chance to see the





**Roller Bros. carried this attractive ticket trailer. Shark show at right rear caught fire later in the year. Fred D. Pfening Jr. photo.**

tattooed lady who sold photos of herself. A micro-menagerie consisting of a camel, a llama, and a zebra also occupied the side show. The performance, which was backed up by an organ and drums, was better than average for a show this side, and included a mixed cat act, a bear act, a well framed dog and pony act, and a January mule act in which kids from the audience participated.

The Jules and Beck Circus also had a bad season. Owner Pat Guthrie's troubles began on May 7 when Twinkles, a very sick elephant at the Atlanta zoo, was loaded into one of the show's semis. The zoo veterinarian had recommended that the animal be removed from the zoo to facilitate her recuperation, and contacted Guthrie who had inquired months earlier about acquiring an elephant for his circus. Guthrie took the bull on the road with him, and she died in Cherryville, North Carolina on May 9 in spite of his efforts to save her. While he was initially carved up by the Atlanta press, dogged along his route by law enforcement agencies, and heckled by locals who called him an elephant killer, it later became apparent that the zoo veterinarian, who was eventually suspended, had loaned out other animals as a general pattern of mistreatment and mismanagement at the zoo emerged. Guthrie was never charged, but the elephant's death cast a shadow over the Jules and Beck season.

The show opened at Conyers, Georgia on April 2, sponsored by the American Legion. Observers felt it looked better

on the lot than in 1983 as the semis had been painted and lettered, and the performance was stronger. Midway included a midget horse, snake show, moon bounce, elephant ride, concession trailer, and novelty trailer. Rex Williams and his four elephants opened with the show, giving it a total of six early in the season. He left a few days after the start to make some Shrine dates for Gracie McIntosh, leaving a bull leased from Hoxie Tucker, and one owned by Bill Rivers. The program took about an hour and a half, and took place under a 90 foot round top with a 40 foot and two 30 foot middles which was used in 1983. Bobby Green's air calliope provided the music.

Jules and Beck traveled on five show-owned trucks, and seven or eight privately owned vehicles. Some of the equipment was leased from Hoxie Tucker. The show used several designs of Enquirer stock paper, and veteran Rudi Jacobi did some of the booking. While business started off good, it faded as the seasons progressed and the show closed in Manchester, Kentucky on July 6 after three months of touring the South. As was done in 1983, Mel Silverlake took some of the equipment for Col. Mel's Wild West which made a series of spot dates in Virginia and North Caro-

**Jules and Beck on the lot at Roswell, Georgia on April 7. This outfit died around the 4th of July. Joe Bradbury photo.**



lina from July through December.

A new addition to the roster of tented troupes was the Toby Tyler Circus out of Sarasota. It was owned by Dick Garden and Ron Morris. Veteran Johnny Frazier was the superintendent, and Lucio Cristiani was the performance director. The show opened in mid-June in Virginia, and played the Eastern United States including West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey, closing at Bridgeton, New Jersey on September 9.

With a new 90 foot round with three 30s middle section big top from Bruno the show looked great on the lot. A three ringer, the show used a six and seven piece band which played traditional circus tunes scored by Beatty alum Charles Schlarbaum. The performance, a ninety minute production, featured the Lucio Cristiani family riding act, and Bones Craig with two elephants.

The front yard had an elephant ride, pony sweep, snake show, petting zoo, two hippos in a pit show, a concession semi, and a moon bounce. The latter has become an unfortunate staple on front doors in recent years. This outfit moved on ten show-owned rigs and another ten vehicles owned by performers. While some Enquirer paper was posted, the show relied heavily on phone promotion—so heavily in fact that its use created some heat in New York in July, and New Jersey in August where officials charged that the pitch was stronger than allowed by state law. Bad publicity made it difficult to obtain lots and licenses in the area, and consequently some days were lost.

Hoxie Bros. Great American Circus, owned by Allan C. Hill, had a long, and, one presumes, successful season beginning in Davie, Florida on March 21, and closing in Sarasota, Florida on November 6. In between the show made played its usual stronghold in the mid-Atlantic states, and in the late summer and early fall went into the Midwest. The show was in the news when the elephant Hoxie walked off from the Miami quarters for nine hours in late January, and again when another elephant, this one named Jessica, pulled the same stunt in February. The other two bulls, Kelly and Irene, were apparently less adventuresome. The troupe had some bad luck early in the season as a semi was demolished. April showers gave the fork lift a work out pulling the show off muddy lots, and at least one Florida date was cancelled because of the rain. When the show played Glen Falls, New York a memorial service was held at the graves of Poodles and Grace Hanneford, a fine gesture bringing to mind Jack Mills who also honored departed members of the profession. Wesley Brown began the year as manager, but by August Pete Cristiani had the job. Hill, whose background is in concessions





**Intermission on the Hoxie and Great American Circus. While the elephants give rides on the right, singer Tiny Tim autographs programs on the left. He proved to be a great attraction. Tom Parkinson photo.**

and promotion, spent much of his time ahead of the show.

The tent was an 80 foot round with two 30 foot and one 40 foot middle. The popular Charlie Moyer led the three piece band. The performance was rather interesting for a show this size, and included such novel acts as an Australian whip cracker, a boxing kangaroo, and an elephant act which included both Asians and Africans. Tim Loyal's riding was acclaimed by knowledgeable critics. The midway included the usual—moon bounce, pony sweep, concession wagon, and elephant ride. A nice side show, managed by Billy Martin, was also in the front yard. The 60 foot round with a 30 foot middle tent housed a Punch and Judy show, an electric girl, a rubber girl, a snake charmer, and a fire eater in addition to displaying the menagerie.

The biggest news from the Hoxie camp was the signing of 1960s cult singer Tiny Tim for twenty-two days starting September 10 in Lincoln, Illinois. The falsetto tuner closed the first half of the show by singing perhaps a dozen songs, including his signature "Tiptoe Through the Tulips." At intermission he signed autographs, and also appeared in the finale. Small town America rarely sees anyone of even his stature, and as a result he was received as a visiting dignitary by radio stations and papers in Illinois and Indiana farming communities. He appeared to have boosted attendance, and definitely garnered the show some big-city publicity as the wire services picked up the story and the staid *Wall Street Journal* published a feature on him.

John Lewis' Lewis Bros. Circus was at it again, opening in Hagerstown, Maryland on May 3. The show used an old King Bros. big top which was a 90 foot round with three 40 foot middles and sat over 1000. The one ring performance was backed up by a five piece band headed by Jack Jackson which played many old-time circus favorites. Gary Holveck was the singing ringmaster a la Harold Ronk. Midway included a side show with a four panel banner line

featuring a fire eater, rubber girl, magician, knife thrower, and a menagerie which consisted of a tiger, panther, hyena, monkeys, and three ostriches. Also carried were two elephants, one a baby African. Later unconfirmed reports had the show buying two more elephants, leasing two from Hoxie Tucker, and bringing in Tarzan Zerbini's bulls to beef up the performance. This aggregation traveled behind eight diesel rigs with nicely painted trailers, and the show used lots of paper on the advance.

Lewis Bros. had its share of problems. Apparently the show had difficulty booking dates, and had some organizational problems. Hoxie Tucker came out of his short-lived retirement to join the show as manager in July. The show got in dutch with New Jersey SPCA which claimed a bear on the show was deprived of medical attention, not provided with food, drink, or protection from the weather, and treated in an inhumane manner. Evidently a truck carrying the animal broke down and was left somewhere for repairs without an attendant or care for a day which invited the animal lovers' wrath.

The Manuel Ramos family had their Oscar Bros. Circus out again, opening on March 23 in Brandon, Florida. This one traveled on six trucks, some of which were well painted and lettered. Vehicles included a bus used for office-ticket wagon. A three ring circus, it used a 130 foot round top with one 60 foot middle section which was made of red and white striped canvas, and seated about 800. The performance, which included the normal small show fare less an elephant, lasted an hour and a half, and was backed up by taped music. The show did some bill posting. Route information was spotty, but it made sponsored dates in Florida for the

police and other groups through at least May.

The Roberts Bros. Circus, headed by the Robert Earl family, started out its eleventh season in late January at Vero Beach, Florida as a free attraction for the firefighters at a county fair. It was the first time they had worked this type of date. The show began its traditional schedule of sponsored dates in late March in Florida, after which they headed north into the Virginias, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York where they played through early July. They then appeared in New England through August, making some dates in the mid-Atlantic region late in the month. The tour concluded on October 23 in Folkston, Georgia after traveling about 9000 miles. Town fathers in Middleboro, Massachusetts lifted a ten year ban on outdoor shows when Roberts appeared there in August; the city is former home of General and Mrs. Tom Thumb. Jimmy Cole was presented with an honorary ringmaster certificate at Utica, New York on July 1.

The show used a 60 foot round top with a 40 foot, and two 30 foot middle sections, which sat about 1500, and the band consisted of an organ and drums. The performance lasted about an hour and forty-five minutes and included Laura and John Walker, and various members of the Earl family. The midway included an elephant ride, moon bounce, concessions trailer, pony sweep, two flat joints, and a freak dog pit show. This outfit moved on fifteen vehicles, seven of which were show owned trucks, including two semis, and three straight beds.

Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancy had Bentley Bros. Circus on the road. After spending most of May and June in California, the show headed east for July dates in Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and Iowa. September found the show in Kansas, Arkansas, and Missouri, closing late in the month. While the show generally worked as a grandstand attraction at fairs, it carried its own seating on two trucks which allowed it to play a variety of dates, including shopping malls. A three ringer, the performers included Ada Smieya and her tigers, and Tegge and Sicard, clowns. A five piece band provided music. One of Smieya's tigers had emergency surgery at the university of Illinois Large Animal Clinic in September. In December Bentley and Clancy produced a Christmas show called the Mark Charles Holiday Revue.

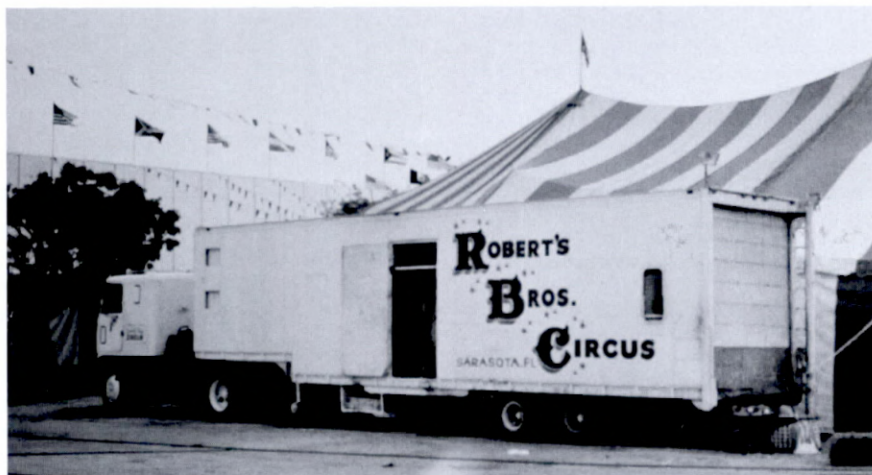
Circus D'Carlo, owned by former flyer Carlos Farfan, pitched its 120 foot square Canobbio big top at the World's Fair in New Orleans, closing November 11. Lots of paper was up on the fairgrounds advertising the show. It was set up at the entrance to the Italian Village, and admission was charged for the one ring performance, although a high wire motorcycle act was presented outside



beforehand. Displays included juggling, contortion, magic, perch, a Gaucho act and cloud swing, about an hour and a quarter of entertainment backed up by canned music. The performance may have had animals in it at one point, but when one reviewer saw it in September, not a single non-human actor appeared. Tent was air conditioned, and butchers worked only during intermission. In a November interview Farfan stated his desire to book the show into fairs in 1985.

Kay Bros., owned by Chuck Kay, toured the plains states and the Midwest under an 80 foot round top with three 40 foot center sections. Two new seat wagons were added, and early in the season the show advertised for phone men, an indication that it planned to make some spot dates, and not rely completely on fairs. This troupe moved on five trucks, carried one elephant named Kenya, and called themselves Gray Bros. in a March want ad. The Emmett Kelly Jr. Circus did some Auditorium Bros. dates in Michigan early in the year, but spent most of its time at the International Wild Life Park in Grand Prairie, Texas, near Dallas, as a free show in a 1200 seat Bruno tent. It gave three forty minute shows seven days a week, presenting Killer Willard, the boxing kangaroo and Donny Johnson's tigers, among other features. After the Texas interlude the show made at least one date in California in September.

Tom Liebel's Liebel Family Circus played small fairs in festivals the deep South, the Midwest, Pennsylvania, and New York from March through at least August. The show used a two pole, bale ring top made out of blue plastic, using a one ring set up. Four vehicles carried the equipment, personnel, and animals, including a tiny African elephant. Swan Bros. Circus made California fairs under canvas with dates in at least July, September, and October. John Herriott fulfilled a long time dream by framing the Herriott Trained Animal Circus, a free show on the Olympic Expositions Carnival out of Orlando, Florida. Herriott, his wife, and two of his daughters put on much of the hour long performance under a big top seating 800. Later in the year, the show made some spot dates, and at last report he was ready to give it a go again in 1985. Friendly Bros., a much smaller new outfit, made some dates in New York state from May to September, traveling in one truck. Put out by Dr. John Schoonback, the show used an 80 by 50 foot push pole tent. Performers included Lottie Brunn and Bob Good; music was taped for two hour show. Dave Twomey's Happytime Circus played about 250 dates, all in California, including a big stand at the Los Angeles County Fair in September. For that one he beefed up his usual show by bringing in Carol Buckley and the Tarra the



**Robert Earl's Robert Bros. Circus carried this combination power plant and elephant truck. Arnold Brito photo.**

elephant. Transported by two trucks and two trailers and using an 80 by 50 foot red and yellow big top, Happytime played a number of California fairs, and also experimented with some school dates, a first for the troupe.

The year started off badly for Earl Tegge, owner of the TNT Circus, when he was hospitalized in late February for a collapsed lung. He was back at it by the time the show played Tucson in mid-March. TNT played exclusively shopping malls as a one ring, side walled free show. Its route took it all over the Western states, and the Midwest. The show was featured at the CFA convention in San Antonio, Texas in mid-July, and closed at Fort Wayne, Indiana in late October. Jimmy Cole opened his Cole All Star TV Circus in Halifax, Pennsylvania on January 21, and closed it at Margaretteville, New York on April 11, playing mostly small town gyms for school support groups in those two states in between. The ninety minute performance included a magic act, and Gracie Hanneford's dog, the first animal act on his show in years. March 3 was declared Jimmy Cole Day in his home town of Penn Yan, New York, a deserving tribute to a great old-timer who began in the business on Andrew Downie's Walter L. Main show in 1924. John Strong sold his tent to Dory Miller in 1983, but took out a gym show, called Strong's Circus and Variety Show, playing the Western states, Plains states, and the Midwest. A spring tour started in February, and ended in late June. In August show reopened, and he booked three magic shows. The circus carried no animals and featured fire eating, magic, clowns, a juggling and balancing act, and a Punch and Judy show.

The Pickle Family Circus, headed by Larry Pinsoni had side walled dates in the three Pacific Coast states. This show was a non-profit corporation which raised money for good causes.

Another non-profit troupe was the No Elephant Circus, founded by Bob Daraio. The six member troupe performed for a number of corporate clients, and used the money to perform gratis benefits for such groups as the Special Olympics, emotionally disturbed children, and symphony orchestras. This outfit gave 200 performances before 70,000 people, mostly indoors, and had a budget of \$100,000. In the 1840s churchmen railed against circuses; now they run them as evidenced by Father Nick Weber, S.J., who headed the Royal Lichtenstein 1/4 Ring Side Show Circus out of San Jose, California. The show was technically owned by the Jesuits. After rebuilding from a disastrous fire the day after Christmas, 1983, Royal Lichtenstein made a lengthy tour, going into the Eastern and Southern states for the first time. The performance, which was made up of six actors and five animal acts, was framed for either indoor or outdoor set up. A unique aspect of the displays was that each illustrated an ethical or moral point. The Make-A-Circus out of San Francisco exhibited in California during the summer. This one conducted classes in the circus arts for part of the year.

As they always have been and probably always will be the two units of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey were the finest of the indoor shows. The Blue troupe, which was the new show in 1984, made its traditional Venice, Florida opening on January 5. It played a cross country route with major stops at Miami Beach, New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Chicago, closing at Nassau, New York on December 2. The L.A. and Anaheim dates were moved to September so they would not day and date the Olympics. Nevertheless business in Southern California was down because of a heat wave. Reports were that business was also off at the two month Madison Square Garden date.

The January 11 issue of *Variety* carried a special section saluting Irvin Feld on the 100th anniversary of the Ring-



ling title. CBS taped the show at St. Petersburg that same month with Barbara Mandrell hosting. Later in the year Feld was honored at a black tie dinner held by the Anti-Defamation League. Lakeland, Florida continued its efforts to woo the show to move its quarters there, but at last report the tax problems in Venice had been resolved, and the circus planned to stay. The equipment was carried on forty-three railroad cars including four stocks, two storage, twenty-five coaches (including the pie car), eleven flats, and one bi-level car. At the last engagement a showgirl died from a fall while rehearsing a trapeze act.

Many observers felt the program was the strongest the Blue unit had presented in years. The spec commemorated great moments in the show's history, and included floats carrying replicas of Gargantua, Tom Thumb and some of the other box office smashers associated with the show. Spec also had performers dressed in head masks of Barnum, Bailey, and the five brothers Ringling. Headline acts were Wade Burck working John Cuono's white tigers; the Survivors, a South African aerial cradle troupe; Mark David, a homegrown aerialist from Baraboo, Wisconsin; Alex Gautier and twenty-one elephants in a production number; and the Flying Vazquez. The two hour forty-five minute exhibition also included a number of Eastern European acrobats. A beautiful program was published which included as an insert a poster for the Vazquez flyers which brought back memories of the work Strobridge and Courier did generations ago.

The Red unit opened at Venice on January 26, and generally played smaller cities. A number of big towns were made, however, including Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Kansas City, Detroit, and Boston. As has been done in the past, the company closed at Cleveland on November 18. The show played Orlando, Florida for the first time since 1971, and the mayor declared January 31-February 5 Ringling-Barnum week, a nice bit of publicity. Another PR opportunity occurred in April when a Girl Scout troop was formed on the show in Washington. At Nashville in June *Amusement Business* editor Tom Powell was guest ringmaster. The train jumped the tracks just as it pulled into Orlando. Elephants and other lead stock were unloaded and walked to the building from that point. There were no injuries.

The personnel and program were much the same as last year as the Pink Panther motif was continued. Major acts included Dolly Jacobs on Roman rings, the Carrillo brothers on the high wire, and Gunther Gebel Williams with cats, liberty horses, and elephants. Performance also featured leapers, a popular act seldom seen in recent years. The



Ringling-Barnum commissioned this portrait bill to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Ringling Bros. first performance. It is the first portrait poster used by a circus since Floyd King and Arnold Maley put their faces on some King Bros. paper in the mid-1950s. Richard J. Reynolds collection.

Carrillos and Jacobs closed early to join Big Apple for the New York Christmas date. Lou Jacobs, Dolly's father, celebrated his 60th year with the show by still doing his famous hunter black out before the show and riding in spec with daughter Dolly. Chimp trainer Mickey Antalek died suddenly in August.

Irvin Feld's death on September 6 cast a pall over the entire season. Reports were that his departure would not create any major shake up of personnel or policy as a strong management team, headed by Kenneth Feld, had been in place for years. Other observers speculated, however, that some ideas Feld had vetoed might now be tried. One indication of who's in charge is that 1985 Red show advertising begins "Kenneth Feld Presents..." which neatly marks the dawn of yet another new era for the greatest name in the history of American circuses.

The Royal Hanneford Circus, owned by the Tommy Hanneford family, was a leading big city Shrine circus, playing a number of Orrin Davenport's old dates. Opening in Flint, Michigan, just as Polack Bros. did for years, in early January, the show played a series of Shrine dates, sometimes splitting into two units, called the Red and the Green. Dates included Dayton, Cincinnati, Tampa, Minneapolis, Houston, Austin, New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and per-

haps the most cherished engagement in the country, Detroit. Austin, a former Bob Atterbury stand, and Minneapolis, an ex-Zerbini town, were new dates. At Detroit, which was celebrating its seventy-sixth year of Shrine circuses, Hanneford gave a very fine two and a half hour show which featured three flying acts; the Garzas, living statues; the Woodcock, Cristiani, and Hanneford elephants, Alan Gold and his cats, but no riding acts for probably the first time in the history of that august presentation. A woman directed the band at this one, and Struppi Hanneford was rushed to a hospital for major surgery during the run. A contingent of the troupe played a four day, four city satellite tour under the sponsorship of the Detroit Shrine immediately after the date ended, an interesting wrinkle to the economic side of Shrine circusing and an indication that local temples can no longer increase receipts simply by extending the show's stay.

Starting at Rye, New York in June the outfit made a series of under canvas dates, calling itself the Royal Sanger Circus. The show used the former Circus World Museum big top which was a 100 foot round with a 50 foot middle, and sat 1800. A one ringer with an organ and drums providing the music, the performance featured Mark Karoly, a fine young rider. Traveling behind six

Ringling Barnum used the old-time slogan "so gigantic it takes 42 double railroad cars to contain it," a good line. Fred Dahlinger collection.



semis and a flat bed trailer, Sanger played mostly sponsored dates, and a few fairs. The Shrine dates resumed in the fall, although an odd late season tented date was made in Atlanta in November. During that stand, the lights went out during Alan Gold's cat act; Struppi Hanneford drove the family car into the back door and turned the brights on the cage, whereupon Gold finished his turn.

The Tarzan Zerbini Circus was another major force in the Shrine circus business. Like Hanneford this show carried two units, called the Gold and the Blue. The Gold show started in Fort Wayne on February 3, and closed at Bremerton, Washington on June 30. This unit reopened in Mississauga Ontario in July, and closed the year at Chattanooga in early October. The Blue troupe started in Columbus, Ohio at the end of March, and ended its season in the winter quarters town of Joplin, Missouri in late July. The Zerbini show played a number of medium and medium-large cities including Memphis, Albuquerque, Spokane, Seattle, Portland, Salt Lake City, Vancouver, and Edmonton, Toronto, which was played from July 16 to August 18, was the year's biggest date. The itinerary included many towns in the Pacific Northwest and in Canada, and unconfirmed reports had the show making some stands under canvas.

The Gold unit had a walk-a-round called "Down Main Street USA," a recreation of an old fashioned circus

**Benny Williams was one of the featured performers on the Vargas show. Albert Conover photo.**



parade. At Fort Wayne Tarzan's cat act included eight tigers and five lions. Missing from the group was Tommy, the big male lion who for twenty years handed Zerbini his tail each night. Tommy was retired, but continued traveling with the show. Joe Marcan worked the cats on the Blue unit. Tarzan's ex-wife Jacqueline produced the Columbus date to mixed reviews. One feature which went over in Columbus was a novelty act called Los Dancing Gauchos who danced, played drums, swung bolos, and generally made a ruckus, all in fast cadence. While really a caberet act somewhat ill suited to a large arena, the audience responded to their energy.

Eddie Zacchini's Olympic International Circus had its usual Shrine dates including Nashville, Chicago, and some Florida towns. He also had the circus at the Florida State Fair at Tampa in February. The show, which took place under a rented Harold Barnes tent, lasted about an hour and featured a bear act, a dog act, two elephants, a trampoline act, a flying act, and an aerial cradle act. In Chicago, a couple were married in catman Bill Cramer's steel arena just before a matinee by Rev. Phil Schacht who had the elephant on the show. Schacht's Dondi did a nice drunk elephant routine, a throw back to the vaudeville bull acts early in the century. Of the Chicago performance, a reviewer for the *Sun Times* wrote that "The secret to enjoying the Shrine Circus is not to have high expectations," a patronizing statement which would appear ridiculous if applied to any of the other performing arts. This slur, however, did point up the general lack of seriousness with which the public takes its circuses, and reflected the widely held belief that they are simply entertainment for children.

The Gatti Charles American Continental Circus opened at Nacogdoches, Texas in early February. The show played both indoor and outdoor arena dates in the Southwest and the Pacific Coast states for a variety of sponsors including the Shrine, the Knights of Columbus, the Police, and the Firefighters. This troupe played some large towns such as San Francisco, Las Vegas, Seattle, and Austin. The Carden International Circus made both Shrine and fair dates, opening in Muscogee, Oklahoma in early February. Major cities for this outfit were Milwaukee, Denver, South Bend, and Orlando, all for local Shrines. On the early dates, Bobby Gibbs worked the elephants, and Ada Smieya had her cat act. On the evening of April 2 two feet of snow fell on the show in Nebraska, stranding the eighteen trucks which were on their way from Texas to Jamestown, North Dakota. The delay forced the cancellation of Jamestown, and next town, Bismarck. In August Carden made Cincinnati's Hamilton County Fair under a big

top, and later that month exhibited at the Missouri State Fair.

The oldest title on tour among the fraternal organization shows was Hamid Morton which began its season at Joplin, Missouri in February and ended in Norfolk, Virginia in June. In between it displayed in Pittsburgh, Providence, St. Paul, Oklahoma City, Kansas City, Topeka, Hartford and Bridgeport, among others. Most of the sponsors were local Shrines. The Rix bears, and the Cueno elephants appeared in some of the cities. Alberto and Sandra Zoppe had their Circus Europa at Buffalo, Rochester, and Little Rock for the Shrine. Later in the year they played Little Rock again, presumably under a tent, this time for the Kiwanis. Some of the summer was spent at a water park in New York state. The Coronas Circus had its most successful year ever according to Charles Coronas, Sr. in a late season interview. The tour started with a week's run under canvas for Budweiser in Tampa during Super Bowl week. Soon after a series of Shrine dates began including major ones around Atlanta, and Shreveport. Later on some fair dates were made in their new big top, and a fall Shrine tour, which concluded in Kansas City in late October, ended the season.

Garden Bros. Circus, the Hamid-Morton of Canada, had a number of dates north of the border as well as a few in this country. At the Montreal Shrine in early March the program was printed in both French and English. Ottawa, and Toronto were also played. A March date in Allentown, Pennsylvania featured Ben De Wayne's five elephants, and a nine piece band. Jose Cole had his regular double season with the spring tour lasting from March 24 to May 6 and the fall one in September. Dates were in Minnesota, and the Big Sky states. A September performance in Princeton, Minnesota took place on a hockey rink. Much of Cole's talent spent the summer working at the Circus World Museum; because of the museum's proximity, and its May to early September schedule the connection was a natural. The Woodcock elephants were among those making both tricks.

Ron Kelroy had a number of Shrine dates including ones at East St. Louis, Rockford, and Springfield, Illinois; and Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky. Ex-Beatty bandmaster Bill "Boom Boom" Browning lead the musicians at Louisville. Kelroy also had his Festival Circus at Summerfest in Milwaukee, had some fair dates, including the Illinois State Fair in August, and had several independent dates. Jim Northmark's International All Star Circus was out from February until just before Christmas, hitting a reported 250 cities, and traveling 30,000 miles. The ninety minute show played small arenas and gyms in the Southeast, East, and Midwest. To overcome the lingering preju-





The Carden Bros. Circus played the Hamilton County Fair, near Cincinnati, under the big top in August. Albert Conover photo.

dice against circuses which still existed in Puritan New England the show dropped the word "circus" from its title at Attleboro, Massachusetts to save on license fee as the charge was higher for circuses than other live shows. Troupe moved on 14 trucks, and carried a seven piece band. Hines Rucker managed the company as Nordmark concentrated on the advance which was all phones as no lithos or window cards, nor any TV or radio advertising were used. Only one small newspaper ad was generally run for each date. Ed Migley's Circus Odyssey was in Puerto Rico in early January, and began a series of Shrine dates later in the month in New York, Pennsylvania Shrine engagement in April was a major coup as it had been a Hamid Morton stand for thirty years. Migley beefed up the date with two flying acts, ten elephants, and two motorcycle acts. Usually the show traveled on two semis, one straight bed truck and a trailer.

Donnie Johnson had some Texas dates in March, and the late summer, mostly in outdoor arenas. In June he produced Shrine circuses in Sharon and Erie, Pennsylvania, calling the shows Clyde Bros. At the same time another Johnson show made Shrine dates in small Illinois towns, including Bloomington where Barney Adkins, son of the great Jess Adkins, was Shrine circus chairman. Al and Shirley Stencell's Super Circus made a series of small town indoor dates in Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime providences in April and May. Their tented show, Martin and Downs, stayed in the barn. Sam Polack, nephew of renowned Shrine producer I.J. Polack, kept busy by handling Toledo Ohio's Shrine circus for the twelfth consecutive year. He also had Shrine dates at Charleston, West Virginia, and Fayetteville, North Carolina in October. James Hetzer's International Circus, out of Huntington, West Virginia, had its regular spring tour of small towns in a four state area along the Ohio River, and later had the Diary Mart Circus, a grandstand show, at the West Virginia State Fair. Tony Diano's bulls worked

this one. In the fall, some other dates in West Virginia were played. Hetzer's daughter, Kathy Rogers, was the troupe's singing ringmistress. This one had some coverage on the PM Magazine TV show.

Bill Kay produced Shrine shows in a number of medium size towns such as Madison, Syracuse, Parkersburg, West Virginia, and Sarasota. George Hubler had a February to November route from New York to Oklahoma and from Michigan to Georgia. A typical date was one at Grand Rapids, Michigan on June 4 at a college field house for the Kiwanis. Boom Boom Browning directed the band, and Harry Mills worked concessions. Hubler also exhibited for a number of Shrines and fairs. Wayne McCary promoted spring Shrine dates in New England, and had the Big E Super Circus at the Eastern States Exposition at West Springfield, Massachusetts in September. Latter was a one ring affair lasting an hour, and using a dozen musicians. Dwight Damon also had some late summer New England dates. Bob Snowden produced at the Shrine circus in Manchester, New Hampshire in early April. Norbert Kreisch had the Police Circus in New Orleans in April, and played the Crescent City again in September. Kreisch spent most of the year being Norbu, the almost-human gorilla on various indoor shows. Grace McIntosh had her M & M Circus at Shrine promotions in Nebraska and Michigan. Rex Williams and his elephants worked some of the Nebraska dates. Bob Atterbury had Texas Shrine dates in San Antonio, Ft. Worth, and Dallas in November. A late October Austin booking was not for Shriners.

The Hanneford Family Circus, run by George and Vicky Hanneford, had a series of fair dates throughout the year, some of them on the back end of the United Shows Carnival. The Kentucky State Fair in August was a major

engagement. For this one they gave three shows a day under a one ring and one stage big top. Tent was a new Leaf canvas with a 90 foot round and a 40 foot middle. A three piece band backed up a fifty minute program which included liberty horse, magic, a bear act, and three elephants. Hanneford and his family put on most of the presentation. Alfred and Joyce Vidbel's Old Tyme All American Circus toured New York state resort areas in July and August doing one day in a one ring big top. Bucky Steele's elephants and the Plunkett family were among the acts.

World Circus, an arena show put together by Paul Kaye, may be remembered as one of those heroic failures which occur about once a decade. His attempt to meld traditional circus acts with rock and roll culture was a real innovation. A large rock band complete with singers and go-go dancers backed up the acts, and the performance included a laser light show. The two and a half hour performance had many top acts, and was billed as a five ring extravaganza. Reports indicated, however, that they never used more than two rings at once, and critics noted that the rock and roll music hurt the acts' timing and failed to create a circus atmosphere. After opening in Las Vegas in June, the troupe moved into Los Angeles for what was supposed to be a June 20-July 1 run, followed by a national tour. Show died on June 24, and the actors were paid off short. Kenneth Feld caught the opening, and was apparently impressed enough that

Paul Kaye's World Circus 84 was an innovative failure which combined the world of the circus with that of rock and roll.

# WORLD CIRCUS 84

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Ringling later took wait ads in the L. A. papers. Kaye also had his usual Hawaiian date cancelled, but did take his American Aerial Circus to Japan, and produced the Evansville Shrine date in November.

Among the smaller arena, mall, and fairground shows, Heidi Wendany called her show Falkenburg's Royal European Circus for April arena dates in California and Oregon, but used the traditional Funs-A-Poppin title for some later California bookings, and called it the Christmas Circus when she produced the show for Bill Ystad in December. Karl and Sheila Winn's Circus Europorama had a June and July swing along the west coast, playing gyms. Bill Garden's Holiday Hippodrome played the East and Midwest from at least April through June. A school show which made one day appearances in small towns for service clubs, the troupe was managed by Floyd Bradbury, and the performance lasted an hour and a half. John and Betty Reid's Reid Bros. Circus made a number of spring indoor dates in Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, some of which were for small town Shrines. At Pendleton, Oregon in May the show used two rings and a steel arena which stayed up during the entire performance. Norbu the gorilla man, the Berosini cats, and the George Hanneford elephants headlined the acts. The music was provided by a trumpet player who doubled on drums, and an accordionist, the combination of which must have sounded awful. Reid Bros. also made a Texas date in October.

Scott's Continental Circus played some auditorium dates in Ontario early in the year, then changed its name to Taylor Family Shows for a series of Ontario fairs in May and June. A petting zoo was part of the fair presentation.

David J. Mobbs produced the Circus USA at the Miami International Mall in October. Arnold Brito collection.



The Royal Hanneford Circus at Marietta, Georgia in early November. The big top was from the Circus World Museum. Joe Bradbury photo.

Scott Taylor ran this one. Another two title troupe was the Showtime Northwest, which also called itself the Sterling Family Circus. A gym show playing also exclusively in Oregon, the performance was completely given by the owners, the Tom Wilds family from Mosier, Oregon. Exhibition included liberty ponies, goats, and a llama, and was hauled behind two steering wheels. The Candyland Dog and Pony Circus, headed by Terrell "Punch" Jacobs Jr., son of the legendary lion trainer, had some mall dates in Washington in May. Later in the year the show was a free attraction at the Southeast Washington Fair and Frontier Days in Walla Walla. The Peanut Circus played short dates from January to October in towns from Iowa and Texas eastward. Ray Mac Mahon had the Royal American Circus on one and two day dates in the South. This one hailed from Jackson, Mississippi, and played gyms and auditoriums. Something called Clown-A-Round was in Florida in June and July. Jim Hand had the Fun Time Circus on its own for a while, but combined it with Col. Mel's Wild West for some late season spot dates.

Many circuses existed only for a few weeks or even days as a series of acts were put together for a small number of dates, sometimes only a single date. While local Shrines pioneered this type of circus, many other groups have emulated them. The Carla Wallanda Circus made a number of small fairs. The Walter Childs All Star Circus did service club auditorium dates in New England in the spring. Bill Bleisner produced something called the Magic Circus Royale in a school gym for the Portland, Maine police in April. Waldon Webb had his All American Circus at Las Vegas in May for the Elks. David Smith and his cannon closed the show. Norman Borger and Elton Berlin had their usual June fairground show for the Wheaton, Illinois police. Troupe was called Borger Bros. Phil Morris pro-

duced circuses in Fresno, and Vancouver. Albert Sahlstrom had the Royal Danish Circus at the Woodstock, Connecticut fair in September. Jorge Barreda had the free circus at the Mississippi State Fair. Gil Gray had the Dr. Pepper Circus at the Texas State Fair for twenty-four days in October. It was Gray's twenty-third year at the fair, and he turned eighty during the stand. The Paul Eagles Circus Club gave its annual fund raising circus on March 20 in Downey, California for a children's hospital. Dave Twomey of the Happytime Circus provided some of the equipment. In Gibsonton, Florida the International Independent Showman's Association presented a three ring circus under a big top to benefit local children's services and other community programs.

An old title came back to life when the De Wayne Bros. Circus performed at Huntington Beach, California in Late November. Dave Twomey was involved with this one, and furnished some of the seating. Cliff Mosley provided the tent. An interesting newcomer of this type of show business was Circus USA, produced and directed by David J. Mobbs. It played six days under a rented Harold Barnes big top in Miami in mid-October. The strong corps of acts included the George Hanneford elephants, the Rex Williams elephants, Douglas MacValley and his Globe of Death, the Wallendas, and a human cannon ball. A fifteen piece band backed up the displays. Ex-Ringling staffer Dean McMurray was general manager.

The youth circus was alive and well in 1984. Paul Pugh managed the Wenatchee Youth Circus which displayed in Washington, Oregon, and Colorado in June, July, and August. One Colorado performance was in a football stadium. All the performers were between five and eighteen. The Windy City Circus, directed by Ed Sheehan, was in the Chicago area in June, made the Illinois State Fair in Springfield in August, and had a short tour of southern Illinois in the late summer. It was an open air show using a back drop. The actors were all teenagers or younger, and the circus was the performing arm of the All Youth Circus School in Antioch, Illinois.





The Florida State University Circus appeared at Callaway Gardens during the summer in a 240 foot by 120 foot tent. It was their thirty-eighth season. Sarasota's Sailor Circus had its thirty-fifth anniversary. Warren Wood's Great All American Youth Circus from Relands, California had park and mall dates. This show was connected with the local YMCA. Peru, Indiana's Circus City Festival celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in July with its usual amateur circus. Earlier in the year veterans of past Circus City shows gave a performance; some of the actors went back to the first show in 1959.

The word circus has been used more loosely in recent years as mime, magic, variety, and other marginally circusy troupes have called themselves circuses. Some of 1984's offerings really stretched the limits. Circus Oz appeared in the UCLA campus theater in Los Angeles in July. A satirical show which used the circus as a metaphor to symbolize the modern world, it featured a number of acrobats and experimental theater actors who used the big top as a way to make anti-war and anti-establishment statements. The less political Rosie and Herbert's Little Circus made a number of dates in the East from January to June often playing at corporate picnics and the like. This troupe presented a play called the Clown Love Story which included foot juggling, a tightwire act, and a single trap act. The Circus Alleluia, operated by a church in Tampa as an outreach program had some Michigan and Pennsylvania dates in August, and performed for prison inmates in Florida later in the year. No salaries were paid; everybody on the show was a volunteer, and a collection was taken at the end of each performance.

The year also included some foreign circus activity on this continent. The Great Circus of China, from the People's Republic of China, made a tour of major Canadian cities in May and June. Sergei Sawchyn, formerly of Circus Tivoli, was

**A popular pre-show bally on Carson and Barnes was this old Kelly-Miller ticket wagon which was pulled by a six horse hitch. Art Stensvad photo.**

the producer. The Chinese Magic Circus from Taiwan, appeared in a number of American cities from January to June. Circo Suarez, which toured the southeastern U.S. in 1983 as Suarez-Gaona, did not make it into this country in 1984, playing Mexico instead. The show later went into South America.

The performance at the Circus World Museum included the Flores family, aerialists; the Strongs, horses and dogs; and the Woodcock elephants. The Baraboo museum made lots of news outside the ring as well as director Bill Schultz and his entire board resigned during the summer. A new board, headed by CHS stalwart Paul Ingrassia, was in place by September. On the brighter side, the museum paraded its wagons for the home folks as part of the commemoration of the Ringling show's 100th anniversary. Benson's Wild Animal Park in Hudson, New Hampshire had a permanent circus called King Benson World Circus. The Circus Circus Casino in Las

**Bentley Bros. was one of the more popular of the grandstand shows. Here Heidi Wendany puts some liberty ponies through their paces on the Bentley show at Patterson, New Jersey in July. George Bingaman photo.**



Vegas, which featured circus acts in its main gaming room, continued to be one of that city's most popular hotels. Many other hotels had show acts in their lounges. Circus World park lost \$19.5 million for the year ending January 1984 with attendance down 24% since 1981. In April Mattel finally unloaded the property to James Monaghan, a Phoenix developer, who planned to turn the attraction into a thrill ride center, and de-emphasize the circus theme. Roman Schmitt continued to headline the performance at the park. By year's end, much of the circus property was in New York City awaiting auction.

In other news, a leaflet for New York City toll users stated that starting January 1 elephants would be charged \$19.00 per head to pass through the Lincoln tunnel; cost was \$9.50. Big pre-game party at the Superbowl in Tampa had a circus theme, and featured many circus acts including the Canestrellis, the Lenz chimps, and the Bauer sway-polars. John Herriott was ringmaster. Bauer-Hall Enterprises booked the acts, and some of John Zweifil's wagons made the event. Merle Evans' Carnegie

**The Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus ran some fine newspaper ads, an example of which is shown here. Arnold Brito collection.**

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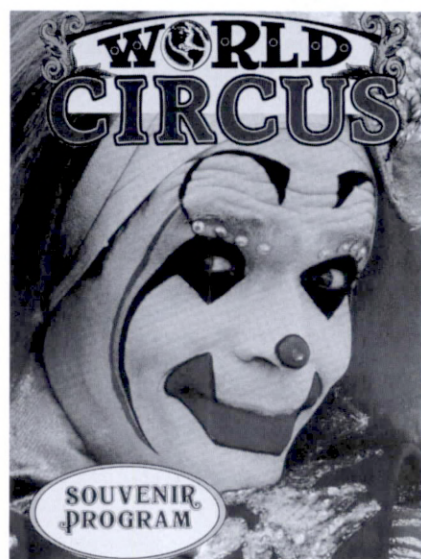
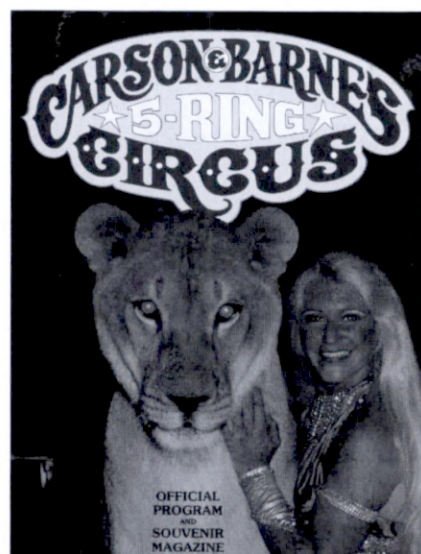
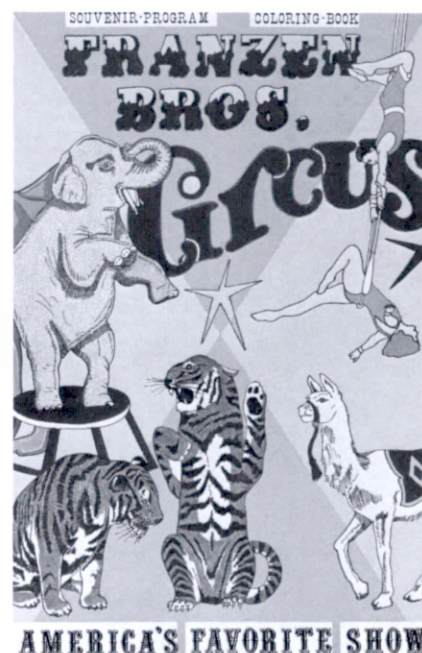
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# 1984 PROGRAMS







Hall debut was cancelled at the last minute due to poor advance ticket sales, but he celebrated his ninety-second birthday on December 26 by conducting a band concert at the Sarasota Opera House. The Actors Playhouse in Los Angeles presented a musical entitled *Those Ringlings* which opened in May with story and lyrics by circus author David Lewis Hammarstrom.

Every season sees the passing of many popular and respected members of the profession, but in 1984 it seemed that more troupers than usual left us. Deaths included: Art "Doc" Miller, old

Tiny Tim was quickly incorporated into Hoxie and Great America's newspaper advertising. Tom Parkinson collection.

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Carlos Farfan exhibited his Circus D'Carlo at the New Orleans World's Fair. Joe Bradbury photo.

time biller, agent, and author; Harry T. Hunt, sole surviving son of Charles T. Hunt; Robert C. Dietch, private zoo operator, and animal dealer who stored Ringling-Barnum animals for years; Don Foote, costume designer for Ringling-Barnum since 1970; Marie Antoinette Concello, the greatest female trapeze artist of them all; Charlie Campbell, ex-agent and author of "Today is Circus Day In . . ."; F. Beverly Kelly, all-time great press agent; Harry Chipman, retired biller and show executive; Hanna Hodgini, ex-wife of Otto Griebing and seamstress on Hagenbeck-Wallace; Francis Kitzman, king of the truck show bill posters; Grace Hanneford, widow of Poodles Hanneford; Arthur Sturmak, owner of Biller Bros. in early 1950s; Gusseppe Canobbi, Italian tent builder whose product is favored by many American showmen; Genevieve Porter, former Ringling-Barnum wardrobe mistress; Alexander Sokolove, executive on Elmer Jones shows seventy years ago; Frankie Lou Woods, long time performer; Mickey Antalek, Ringling-Barnum chimp trainer; Dolly Jahn Copeland, former Ringling-Barnum performer and wife of flyer Tex Copeland; Willi Wilno, human cannonball with Hagenbeck-Wallace and other shows; Percy Turner, owner of Turner Bros. Circus in 1950s and 1960s, and one of only two black show owners in American circus history; Vates Lola Engesser, widow of George Engesser, owner of Shell Bros. and Zellmar Bros.; Ed Widaman, ex-postman who had an independent elephant act in the 1940s and 1950s; Glen J. Jarmes, ex-show executive; and Irvin Feld.

It would be almost impossible to write a summary such as this without the help of many friends who sent information or illustrations. Their contributions put flesh on many a bare bone. My thanks to George Bingaman, Ted Bowman, Arnold Brito, Jerry Cash, Al Conover, Fred Dahlinger, Joe Fleming, Joseph Giordano, Doug Holwadel, Al House, Ed Jones, Bob Kitchen, Frank

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THE CIRCUS

Jim Nordmark's International All Star Circus used this attractive newspaper ad for a February date at Fort Walton Beach, Florida. Arnold Brito collection.

Mara, Fred Pfening Jr., John Polacsek, Dave Reddy, Richard Reynolds III, Hon. Dale Riker, L.A. Sadler, Mike Sporrer, Leroy Sweetland, and Steve Sullivan. Tom Parkinson and Joe Bradbury merit special recognition for taking time from their busy schedules to keep me posted on circus developments throughout the year. Much of the information contained in this article was culled from the pages of *Circus Report*, the new showman's Bible, ably edited by Don Marcks.

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THE STANLEY DAWSON  
CAR #8.**

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Balance in First National Bank May 1, 1983	1362.14	
Balance in Mutual Federal S&L May 1, 1983	1000.00	
		2362.14
Receipts:		
Dues	18883.46	
Subscriptions	2631.59	
Back Issue Sales	1198.10	
Advertising	1858.25	
Convention	1900.00	
Bank Interest	894.02	
Misc. Receipts	168.03	
Total Receipts		27533.45
Grand Total		29895.59
Disbursements:		
Bandwagon Printing	23272.57	
Bandwagon Postage	770.00	
Bandwagon Mailing Expense	737.49	
Sec'y-Treas. Postage	412.00	
Canadian Exchange & Bank Ser. Chg.	91.40	
Misc. Expense	515.89	
Total Disbursements		25799.35
Balance April 30, 1984		4096.24
First National Bank Checking Acct.	256.90	
Mutual Federal S & L Money Market Acct.	3839.34	
		4096.24
Audit Statement prepared by:		
Gerald F. Combs		
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# AL G. BARNES' BIG FOUR-RING WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS

1922 Season  
By Chang Reynolds

The 1922 tour of the Al G. Barnes' Wild Animal Circus was almost an anticlimax to the very successful 1920 and 1921 seasons. Several of the old familiar faces had departed and new, relatively unknown performers had taken their places. For example, Mabel Stark and Martha Florine were no longer with the show after so many years of dependable service. Also, there was a new emphasis on equipment—cages, canvas and seating. Many of the most responsible staff members remained but several new men became department heads. One could state that the close of the 1921 season saw the finale of the old, familiar Al G. Barnes' Circus and the 1922 began a new era that would continue through the years of Barnes' ownership.

A letter from Murray A. Pennock, general manager, appeared in a January issue of *Billboard*. He wrote: "Things are going very nicely here at quarters (Palms, Calif.), and though we have been somewhat handicapped by very bad weather we will open about the usual time, 'larger, greater and grander than ever.'"

"We are building a 2,000-chair grand stand, 14 high starbacks and 18 high blues and will have a 160-foot big top, so our capacity will be considerably increased. (The big top canvas for 1922 was a 160-foot round top with one 60-foot and two 50-foot middle pieces.)

"We bought two 20 k.w. Mathews electric light plants the other day — \$10,000 worth when fully equipped, and invested another chunk in those Bode carvings, which were made for the ill-fated Spellman Show. We are also getting a new steel elephant car, which will make the train steel throughout.

"It may interest you to know that I

will be 'back with it' this year, combining the duties of manager with those of general agent, and routing the troupe and handling the advance from back with it. I have engaged Bill Haines as railroad contractor and Frank Braden as contracting press agent. Vernon Reaver will be the local contractor."

With regard to the Bode carvings and other wagon equipment on the 1922 show, Joe Bradbury, with the valuable assistance of Fred Dahlinger, has provided the following information:

"An early season *Billboard* review stated that the street parade included eight tableau wagons, one steam calliope, and two air calliopes. In all probability these numbers are correct; in fact, Barnes actually had more than eight tableaux available for parade duty. The 1922 season saw the largest Al G. Barnes' street parade to date with several new wagons making their initial appearance in the daily march.

"In February, 1922, the show purchased a number of carvings from the Bode Wagon Co. of Cincinnati which was in the process of going out of the wagon business and was clearing its inventory. Paul Eagles once said that the show paid \$1800 for the carvings which he claimed were worth \$6000. Others, however, believe that Barnes could have gotten a better bargain in used wagons from the Ringling brothers, Hall, etc. The Bode carvings were shipped to the Barnes' quarters at Palms, Calif., and Louis Berg used them on six wa-

gons which he built in the shops there.

"The new group consisted of three tableau wagons, one steam calliope, one air calliope, and one ticket wagon. We know the chassis of the older steam calliope was used in the new one which Berg constructed and no doubt additional parts of the former vehicles went into the building of the others. In any event, the appearance of the six vehicles which Berg built was new. The names applied to them are those which traditionally have been for identification purposes only. No doubt some of the names appear to be mis-applied, such as the case of "Cornelia and her Jewels." Cornelia had nine sons and one of the figures in the group of carvings is definitely female.

"Incidentally, this particular carving appears in the foreground of one of the recently discovered Bode shop photos and was printed in the November-December, 1982 issue of *Bandwagon*. It is pictured with carvings for the Spellman set and Sparks. It is not known for what the group we call "Cornelia" was originally intended.

"The six new wagons which Berg built were as follows: The Elephant Tableau, Cornelia and Her Jewels Tableau, Three Section Carvings (Trees and Scenes) Tableau, Cupids Air Calliope, Atlas and Neptune Steam Calliope, and Girl and Lion Ticket Wagon.

"Unfortunately photos taken on the show in 1922 are not plentiful and it cannot be verified that each of the six new wagons went out that season, but it is believed that all, with the exception of the Girl and Lion Ticket Wagon, were used in the street parade.

"In addition to the three new tableau wagons with the Bode carvings, Barnes

Al G. Barnes Circus on the lot at Cleveland, Ohio, Aug. 21-22, 1922. Note in center of photo the Girl and Lion Ticket Wagon built new with Bode carvings for the 1922 season. Pfening Archives.





also had on hand the following tableau wagons which would have been available for the 1922 parade. These were: Three Oval Mirror Tableau (Barnes' first large parade wagon), Rhino Tableau, Three-Section Paintings Tableau, the ex-Gollmar two-tier Tableau, the ex-Gollmar three-Diamond Mirror Tableau, and the ex-forepaugh-Sells Swan and Fawn Tableau. Thus, the show had a total of nine tableau wagons which could have been in the parade, one more than the *Billboard* reviewer counted.

"The new Atlas and Neptune Steam Calliope was in the parade as well as the new Cupid air calliope. A photo printed here also pictures a second air calliope in the parade at Little Rock, Ark., in 1922. This is the only photo of the wagon that has been found. This vehicle utilized some of the carvings from the side panels of the second ex-Forepaugh-Sells tab den (the other was Swan and Fawn) which Al G. had purchased in Baraboo in 1912. Other carvings from this side panel were used on the sky-board of a rather long cage that appeared on the Barnes' Show in the 1920s, numbered 182 at times. This same cage was adorned with additional carvings (the mermaid and two or three of the dragons) from the "old" steam calliope which was replaced by the Atlas and Neptune in 1922. A photo of the old steamer on the show in 1921 indicated that the photo taken in Little Rock of the air calliope was either newly built or at least acquired its carvings in the early spring of 1922.

"In 1922 the Barnes' Circus had cages that had come from Sells-Floto, Great Wallace, and the John Robinson Circuses. It is assumed that some, or all of these, were in the parade. These cages with the tableau wagons, mentioned above, gave Al G. Barnes a truly unique group of vehicles. Fred Dahlinger observes the following in this regard: 'Looking back, Barnes had the most motley assembly of wagons of any showman at any time. Looking at their origins, they include the Ringlings, Forepaugh, Forepaugh-Sells, Gollmar, Sells-Floto, Wallace and John Robinson. Few shows had a wagon pedigree reading like that.'"

Early in January, Murray Pennock had placed in *The Billboard* the usual want advertisement for riders, trainers and clowns. He requested additional "high-class, useful people in all branches of the circus business. A few more animal trainers for both wild and domestic acts. Two men to break and work two additional seal acts. Twenty more clowns with new and novel numbers. Lady menage riders, fifty more girls to augment the ballet in the most pretentious and spectacular example of allegorical pageantry ever presented under canvas. Girls must have singing voices, and preference given to those who can ride high-school horses. Show



**Al G. Barnes No. 1 bandwagon, Rhino Tableau, in parade. Date and stand are uncertain but the appearance of helmets for the driver and helper would date it 1923 or early 1924. Chet Slusser Collection.**

opens early in March for a forty weeks' season."

An additional short article in late January informed the readers of *Billboard* that the publication had erred in stating that Ralph Hauser would be equestrian director of the Sparks' Circus in 1922. The information should have disclosed that Allen Hauser, connected with the Al G. Barnes' Circus for the past five years, was to be directing the Sparks' programs. Thus, another dependable employee had left the Barnes' Show.

During February a couple of articles in the favorite showman's publication referred to activities at the Palms winter quarters — Barnes' Circus City. One of these gave a good description of the quarters at that time. It stated: "Facing on Washington Boulevard, its front imposing and picturesque with balcony dens of pacing lions and Royal Bengal tigers high above its arched entrance, the newly completed wild animal pavilion at Barnes' Circus City arrests the stream of automobile traffic between Los Angeles and Venice-by-the-Sea. Flanking the ornate doorway are concrete raised pits, where polar, brown and grizzly bears climb and rear and

**Al G. Barnes Elephant Tableau (using Bode carvings) with the clown band atop in parade, 1923 or early 1924. Chet Slusser Collection.**



play against the arctic and mountainous scenic backgrounds, while, in the small park between the pavilion and the boulevard, seals and sea lions in a concrete terraced pool, monkeys in an island enclosure and pheasants in a pagoda further delight the eye of the passing motorist."

The article emphasized that this great "bally" would be talked about by thousands of tourists in every town in America when they had departed balmy southern California for their homes in other states. Some doubt was expressed as to whether the quarters would be open to the public before the show left on tour. It was doubted that the visitors would be allowed entrance since the staff and a work force of two hundred were busy completing their work for the opening date.

This article also mentioned the efforts of Lew Berg to complete the new baggage, tableau wagons and cages on time as well as the sail loft crew working on the new big top. It was stated that the hippodrome track would be a complete ellipsis because of patent wild animal runways, and that it would encircle three wild animal arenas, two stages, and, after the first three displays, when the two end arenas were torn down, two curbed rings. The seating would be an orchestra chair grandstand seating 2200 people with blues eighteen tiers high and an electric fan-cooling system under the huge spread of canvas. It also mentioned the Mathews light plant (to which Murray Pennock had referred in his letter) as two units of 30 kilowatts each.

Additional news in this article men-





tioned the arrival of Louis and Nellie Roth at quarters. Louis was scheduled as head animal trainer for the season. The various trainers were working in the four arenas and three rings in the buildings at the quarters. In conclusion, it was stated that the parade, lengthened by ten cages, all newly built, and six tableau wagons (resplendent with the famous motorized circus carvings from the Bode wagon works) would be twelve rolling wagons longer than was that of any circus in 1921. The world's largest elephant, Tusko, was to be strongly featured during the coming tour and because of his great size a new elephant car was being built.

The second article from quarters reported on a huge banquet given at the winter quarters for all who had participated in the making of the serial film, "In the Shadows of the Jungle," at Warner Bros. Studios. The banquet was staged in the big top especially for the occasion and was located as close to the animal cages as it was possible to get. During the progress of the dinner the guests were entertained by "Lotus," the blood-sweating hippo; "Barney," the baby elephant; and two orangutans. There was a long list of guests included in the article but they will not be listed here. Suffice it to say they included many movie greats, both actors, actresses, producers, as well as the circus people of the area.

The roster of the 1922 edition of the Al G. Barnes' Trained Wild Animal Circus was listed in the 18 March issue of *Billboard*. Included were: Al G. Barnes, proprietor; Murray A. Pennock, manager and general agent; W. J. Prinz, treasurer; Alfred E. Wolff, auditor; W. E. Haines, railroad contractor; Vernon Reaver, local contractor; L. R. Mitchell, special agent; Duncan Nevin, advance press agent; Rex de Rosselli, press agent back with the show; Bobbie Kane, manager of the side-show; Robert Thornton, equestrian director; Lew Berg, general superintendent; Tom Melrose, supt. of privileges; Edw. A. Woeckener, musical director; Nels Lausten, supt. reserved seat tickets; Casper (Whitie) Jensen, supt. of canvas;

Al G. Barnes Cupids air calliope (with Bode carvings) in parade, 1923 or early 1924. Chet Slusser Collection.

W. M. Thompson, trainmaster; Frank Rooney, boss hostler; Al Dean, supt. of commissary; Paul Domschke, supt. of lights; "Doc" Williams, supt. of properties; Jake Posey, supt. of ring stock (Jake had been working for the Cincinnati Traction Co. for the past four years); W. J. Petterson and Dixie Engle, 24-hour agents; Cheerful Gardner, supt. of elephants; Frank Vollney, boss carpenter; Eddie Trees, supt. of animals; "Red" Forbes and Mike Welch, blacksmiths; W. J. Erickson, Mgr. Advance Car No. 1; Frank D. Garrigus, Mgr. Advance Car No. 2; Bill Campbell, checker-up; Frank Bolton, legal adjuster; Bert Rickman, announcer. The show would travel on 30 cars and open at Redlands, Calif., on 7 March. (Note: It should be mentioned at this point that there were several changes in the above staff list during the season. The route book compiled at the end of the season showed new names for some of these positions.)

The Barnes' Show opened the 1922 season as scheduled, at Redlands on Tuesday, 7 March. It concluded the week at Riverside, Brawley, Calexico and El Centro in the Imperial Valley and then rolled to San Diego for the Monday date. Four coastal sites finished the second week and on Sunday the outfit moved onto the Los Angeles lot for seven days. The *Billboard* report of this stand was written by Will J. Farley who insisted that this stand "was the real season's opening." He reported that for three weeks previous the city was billed with posters, banners, cards, etc. Farley apparently was on the lot early for he wrote: "Promptly at 10 a.m. on Sunday morning we heard the first announcement coming from Bobbie Kane's Side-Show."

"On the inside," he wrote, "we found a nicely arranged hall of wonders and plenty of bunting to make it attractive. In the live attractions there are many and no trouble in getting your money's worth. First in point of interest was Prof. A. L. Morrell, who whittled his way

to fame, and is now filling all the empty bottles with work models cut from wood with his jack knife. Paul Herrold, European giant; Nicude De Barsay, 'the smallest general in the world' attracts much attention; Dolletta, 'the Smallest Mother in the world'; Deco, comedy juggler; Prof. Sloan, called the Miracle Man of Magic; L. E. Teller, illusion, 'Vivisection'; Frank Martin, tattooed man; Jim McNulty, Punch and Judy; and Mme. Sheba handles the den of snakes.

"Paul Wayne has the 'blow-off' with his famous mummy, 'The Outlaw.' One of the most pleasing features was the Minstrel Band, in bright green uniforms trimmed in gold braid. They came direct from the Busby Minstrels and are not only good musicians, but clever singers, dancers and comedians. Harry Sloan does the announcing on the inside." Farley then went across the street (the Barnes' show apparently over-flowed the lot) and visited the No. 2 side-show. A Mr. Buck was in charge with the Famous Pin Heads and the Al G. Barnes' evolution man as the special attractions.

Following this pleasant experience, the reporter entered the big top. Among other pieces of equipment he noted four big clusters of eight lights each that were furnished electricity from two immense new dynamos. He mentioned the excellent hour-long concert played by Edward A. Woeckener and his band. Woeckener was costumed in a white uniform which looked great in contrast with cardinal uniforms of the musicians.

"Promptly at 2:15 Bob Thornton shouted, 'Let's go!'" the report continued, "and Bert Rickman blew the first whistle, as the big tournament of natives of the jungle, including wild animals, entered the tent. After it toured the hippodrome track the audience found itself in the midst of the great spectacle, 'Alice in Jungleland.' In the steel arena, seated on a throne, was Richard Dixon, who was the King of the event, while below him sixteen ladies in white ballet costumes were dancing and paying homage to 'Alice,' who this year was Dot Whitney. Bessie Harvey in the part of the Queen was seated on top of Tusko. She was all in white costume with a head piece of white ostrich feathers. (There was no mention of how the big bull was comparisoned.) While 'Alice' lay slumbering on her bed of zebra skins, native songs, chants, etc., were given by the cannibals, Turks, Egyptians, Indians and natives of the Far East. Miss Elva Smith, in a costume of pink gauze, and Alma Owens, in an Oriental costume, gave a series of dances. Miss Du Fore, in a beautiful costume of India design, gave a splendid exposition of the wonderful voice she possesses. After this 'Alice' awakened amid the roar of a den of lions and after her escape the magnificent spectacle ends." As the performers left the tent



'Lotus' moved down the track and performed her stunts of 'shimmying' and opening her mouth. And, only then, the performance proper began.

- Display 1  
 Ring 1 — Group of four performing Shetland ponies with Robert Thornton in a costume of green coat and cap and white trousers.  
 Arena — Group of South American panthers handled by Miss Nellie Roth, who wore a red military costume.  
 Ring 2 — Group of six Shetland ponies in a high school act. Joe Miller in a costume of cream-white and gold braid works them.  
 Track — Joe Tate with his papier-mache horse.

- Display 2  
 Arena — Capt. Wilson with a group of twelve performing brown bears. The act finishes with the largest bear standing on its head.  
 Track — Cheerful Gardner with two Shetland ponies walking the entire length of the track on their hind legs. Also, a tableau carriage all in white with Miss Eliza McCarthy in a pure white costume driving—twelve dogs were doing various stunts around the horses' feet and through the wheels of the carriage.

Display 3  
 A riot of clowns in various antics, led by Phil King, who does some very clever work on the high stilts.

- Display 4  
 Ring 1 — Cheerful Gardner in a navy blue military costume handling two elephants and a Shetland pony.  
 Arena — Capt. Bernard handling three spotted Russian leopards. His costume was of turquoise blue and white braid.  
 Ring 2 — C. H. Baudendistel in a navy blue military costume with two elephants and dogs and pony.  
 Track — Dave Durett with two elephants and the high diving dogs and monkeys.

- Display 5  
 Rings 1 and 2 — Revolving table with clowns, dogs, and ponies.  
 Arena — Cheerful Gardner, in a costume of India, worked an elephant and a small horse.  
 Track — Prof. Drako and his leaping hounds.

- Display 6  
 Rings 1 and 2 — Wrestling brown and black bears.

Display 7  
 One of the oldest of the Barnes' features, yet the one looked for at all performances, Bessie Harvey, the prima donna of the white tops. Mounted on a pure white horse, wearing an old rose coat and white riding trousers with black leggings, she sang herself once more into popular favour, while half a hundred white pigeons flew about her.

- Display 8  
 Arena — Richard Dixon and his group of mixed wild and tame animals. In the cage were bear, goat, pony, dogs, and two lions.



**Al G. Barnes second steam calliope wagon, Atlas and Neptune, featuring Bode carvings. This photo taken in 1924 pictures Dick Allen at the keyboard. Photo by Walker Morris.**

- Display 9  
 Ring 1 — Twelve spotted Liberty horses in every maneuver imaginable including mental calculations. Merrit Bellew in a costume of red, trimmed in gold braid.  
 Arena — Capt. Bernard, dressed in blue and white, put a group of four big brown bears through their paces.  
 Ring 2 — Twelve fawn-colored Liberty horses in the same stunts as those in Ring 1, handled by Max Sable in a black riding costume.  
 Track — A pageant parade, representing the U.S. Navy and world affairs, in which the elephants and all clowns took part.

- Display 10  
 Ring 1 — Two sacred oxen and llama performing under the direction of Bert Laurence who wore a red military costume.  
 Arena — Miss Du Fore handling a group of five lions. She wore a costume of red and buff and finished her act with a Spanish dance among the lions.  
 Ring 2 — Prof. Charles and his performing seals.  
 Track — Dutch Marco and his singing mule.

- Display 11  
 Ring 1 — Posing horses, a pretty act perfectly handled by Ova Ashworth, dressed in a beautiful costume of purple and white.  
 Arena — Bessie Hodshire with a white posing horse.  
 Ring 2 — Posing horses, worked by Kathryn Thompson, who wore a costume of old rose.  
 End of Ring 1 — Miss Drake and her tiny dogs.  
 End of

**Al G. Barnes Cornelia and Her Jewels Tableau used as the sideshow bandwagon at Winona, Minn. June 17, 1924. The wagon was decorated with Bode carvings. Photo by Walker Morris.**

- Ring 2 — Group of performing rabbits.  
 Track — Miss Fowler, dressed in old rose; Miss Bessie Clayton, in tan costume; Kate Buchanon, in white costume; each handling a posing horse.

- Display 12  
 Ring 1 — Dutch Marco and his group of five performing hogs.  
 Arena — Austin King and his leopard performing on the back of a zebra. King's costume was white and black.  
 Ring 2 — Joe Miller and his pony and leaping dogs and monkeys.  
 Track — A riot of clowns.

- Display 13  
 Rings 1 and 2 — 'Dynamite,' the bucking mules.  
 Arena — Group of ten Royal Bengal tigers, in the hands of Louis Roth, with a waltzing tiger to conclude the act. He wore a suit of tan trimmed with gold braid.

- Display 14  
 Ring 1 — Prof. Drako and his performing dogs. Costume white and gold.  
 Ring 2 — Robert Thornton and his seven performing goats. He wore a rube costume.  
 Track — Cheerful Gardner and his '50 tons of performing elephants.'

- Display 15  
 Ring 1 — Austin King and his six performing zebras. Costume white and gold.  
 Arena — Pearl Lingo and her tiger performing with a horse. She wore white and grey.  
 Ring 2 — Jack Kavanaugh and his four performing camels. Costume tan and gold.

Display 16  
 A wonderful display of 20 dancing horses. The rings and track seemed covered with horses and riders and the swaying motion was, to say the least, fascinating. The following ladies in as many different costumes took part: Ova Thornton, Kathryn Thompson, Bessie Hodshire, Nita Buchanon, Elizabeth Clark, Eliza McCarthy, Pearl Lingo, Mrs. Charles Post, Nellie Roth, Elva Smith, Bessie Harvey, Dot Whitney, Miss Fowler, Mary Rickman, Helen Kimball, Peggy Crooks, Billie Kavanaugh, Pompey Fowler, Jacquelin Foor, Ruth Wolfe, Nellie Austin, Miss Cross, Jewel Jackson, Margie Stanford, Laura McCarthy, Mrs. Lawston, Marie McCree, and Mamie Straun. (Total 28 ladies—must have been more horses than the reporter listed.) Austin King in a costume of black and white, on his prize dancing horse, 'Yankee Doodle.'





got a tremendous ovation. This display finished with six hurdle horses jumping.

#### Display 17

- Ring 1 — Cheerful Gardner and his seven performing elephants. He wore blue, orange and gold.
- Arena — Three riding lions, leaping from the back of a horse. Handled most cleverly by Margaret Thompson who wore green and white.
- Ring 2 — C. H. Baudendistel (Highpockets) with "Tusko, the largest elephant now performing."
- Track — The performing ostrich and a riot of clowns.

#### Display 18

- Ring 1 — Riding monkey, dog, and pony with Joe Miller directing. He wore yellow and black.
- Arena — Group of nine male lions, handled by Lorraine Wallace, who wore khaki and black.
- Ring 2 — Pearl Hamilton handling the popular act, "Goodnight Pony." She wore green and white.
- Track — Monkey in a slide for life act.

#### Display 19

- Ring 1 — Mrs. Charles Post in green and white costume, took care of the aerial pony. The aerial lion, "Sampson," guided by Margaret Thompson, in a costume of pink and white.
- Ring 2 — Laura McCarthy, dressed in lavender and green, had charge of another pony in mid-air. This act finishes with a display of fireworks while the animals are suspended at the top of the tent.

### "THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER"

The concert which followed featured the usual Wild West acts (Jack Kavanaugh's group) and the Famous Argentine Troupe of acrobats.

Some comments on the performance: The reader will note that this show featured mammals from the size of a rabbit to that of the gigantic Tusko, and birds from pigeons to an ostrich. With regard to Display No. 17 in which Gardner worked seven elephants in one ring and Highpockets worked Tusko in the other, Bill Woodcock wrote (letter 1 November 1960) that Highpockets told him that Cheerful did about thirty tricks with the seven bulls while he was completing four with the slow-moving Tusko. According to the records available, 1922 was the first year that the big male elephant worked in the performance of the Al G. Barnes' Circus. No mention of his being in an act has been located for 1921—only that he was exhibited in the menagerie. He first appeared in the Barnes' parade in the spring of 1922.

Also, in this letter, Woodcock wrote about Vance as follows: "Sometime between 1920 and when Gardner and Highpockets left the show, while playing in the menagerie, Vance broke a piece off one of his tusks. Stuck it in the ground and broke it off without anybody seeing him do it. When this came to Cheerful's attention, nobody could account for the broken piece of ivory. Gardner raised hell, as he figured one of the hands had picked up the piece of ivory and was holding out with it. Some way or other, it was found buried in the ground. This was only a short piece of the tusk and would grow out again."

As most readers know, Vance later broke off a tusk clear into the gum and

(Season of 1922.)  
**Redlands Tuesday, Mar. 7th**

**AL G. BARNES**  
 BIG 4 RING WILD ANIMAL  
 TUSKO  
 LOTUS  
 ALICE IN JUNGLELAND  
 WOULD BE LARGEST  
 LATEST CIRCUS OF AL G. BARNES  
 EXTRAORDINARY AND PHYSICAL  
 PERFORMANCES 2 AND 3 PM DAILY - LOGS OPEN ONE HOUR EARLIER

Al G. Barnes newspaper ad for it's stand at Redlands, Calif. March 7, 1922. Pfening Collection.

finished his days as a one-tusked elephant. The Barnes' elephant herd in 1922 was composed of these eight animals—Ruth, Babe, Jewel, Pearl, Jenny, Barney, Vance, and Tusko. The last three, of course, were males.

Will J. Farley has a paragraph at the conclusion of his review regarding the parade in Los Angeles. It will be quoted here in full: "Owing to the Sunday opening, the parade was held on the following Monday morning, and as it left the white-topped city it found thousands of people lined all along the prin-

Al G. Barnes Girl and Lion Ticket Wagon with Bode carvings on the lot. Date of this photo is uncertain but was probably taken in the late 1920's. A somewhat modified version of this wagon is currently in the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis. Joe Bradbury Collection.



cipal streets of Los Angeles waiting for what they got—a glimpse of the greatest parade of jungle animals in all the world. Nineteen dens of wild animals, eight tableau wagons, one steam and two air calliopes, besides the elephants, camels, horses and the rest, made the parade over a mile long. There were three bands, all in bright new uniforms. And again, Tusko, the largest elephant in captivity, made his first parade with the Al G. Barnes' Circus. In the center of the line of march there was smaller vehicle. It was an automobile and in it was Al G. Barnes, with his entire family, the man who made all this possible in the short time of ten years."

After the long Los Angeles stand the show made a short move to San Fernando and then completed the long run to the San Joaquin Valley to play Bakersfield, Taft, Porterville and eleven other towns in the extensive valley in the center of the state. The route took the show north to Sacramento where it turned south to pick up coastal cities. It came as far south on the central coast as the Monterey peninsula and then ran north again to make a three-day date at Oakland. A brief note at the time reported that the Barnes' Show would be the last show to play the well-known lot at Eighth and Market streets in San Francisco. The Barnes' dates in that city were April 18-23. On the very next day after the show moved on, workmen were scheduled to start grading and excavating for the erection of an office and store building. This location was the only large space available in the downtown section to the city.

The *Billboard*, 6 May 1922, carried a full page advertisement regarding the Barnes' Show. It featured a photo of Al G. standing on the head of Tusko and a letter from the proprietor to his friends, "in and out of the show world." The opening statement was: "It is my desire to impress upon you that the Al G. Barnes' Circus now occupies the enviable position of admittedly being The World's Greatest Wild Animal Exposition. Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery and that the success of the Al G. Barnes' Circus has promoted others to seek to emulate me has proven a source of never-ending gratification."

The letter continued with additional information revealing the greatness of this circus and the number of novelties amusing and entertaining that Barnes had furnished the public. As illustration of this Barnes quoted his success with the most ferocious of beasts, the tiger. He mentioned Rajah, the only wrestling tiger in the world; Pasha, the waltzing tiger; and Sheba, the first tiger ever trained to do a double somersault. Further information to his public in this letter maintained that: "This season I have introduced Tusko, the largest elephant in captivity. This mammoth creature is a foot and a half taller than the famous "Jumbo" and outweighs



him by nearly two tons. He is without doubt the most wonderful attraction that ever has been presented to the circus-loving public of the world."

As a final summary, Barnes mentions Caesar Wallace, the singing lion; The Little Giant, a singing donkey; Lotus, the only performing hippopotamus in the entire world; and an equine ballet of forty dancing horses and forty dancing girls.

A brief review of the show's six-day San Francisco stand appeared soon after. The dates were April 18-23 with very successful business at each performance. Three parades were given while the show was at the Eighth and Market street lot. The reviewer insisted that the new tableau wagons, bright, clean uniforms, and sleek, well-groomed animals created a new mark in the realm of circus parades.

From San Francisco, the Barnes' Circus moved north to play eight towns in the northern part of the state and then entered Oregon and Washington. This was the usual opening route for the Barnes' show, having made the tour each spring since 1911 with the exception of 1914 when the circus had wintered in Portland, Oregon. News from the show in May included the information that Frank Braden, press representative, had closed with the show and signed with the Sells-Floto Circus as press agent back with the show. Braden had a cross country tour from the Pacific Coast to the Atlantic to report to Sells-Floto at Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Another departure, possibly more famous, was Tusko's well-reported walk away from the lot at Sedro-Woolley in early May. The menagerie hands, trying to corral the big bull, followed in his footsteps for fourteen hours. Tusko seemed not to care to do any damage or hurt anyone, but simply kept out of reach of his keepers. He was finally halted four miles out of town in the mountains and then was returned to the show. The report stated that Tusko had become uneasy and restless with Al G. Barnes absent from the show for several days. With the return of the owner, the huge beast became contented. This last is, of course, press agent material, but the "walk" was sincere enough.

Another of Tusko's escapades was related to this writer by Jack McAfee, famed driver of the "Uncle Sam hitch" and clown with the Barnes' Circus. This tale properly belongs at a later date but will be placed here as further illustration of the huge beast's temperament. Jack was a great story teller and quite descriptive and colorful in his choice of words. The story follows:

"It was a warm, sultry day with nearly all of the personnel and equipment on parade. The lot was deserted and the menagerie tent was empty except for a few cages, the great Tusko and myself. The big bull was standing quietly

except for occasionally tossing hay, flapping his ears or jangling his chains. The sidewalls were tied up in a few places to encourage the languid breezes to move the air under the top and I was propped against a quarter pole reading a magazine. Nearby was a cage of lions with two males staring into space and their front paws dangling over the edge of the wagon bed. Partitioned off from them, but in the same cage, was a lioness sleeping on her back with her front paws at a droopy angle and her hind legs braced against the bars.



The Section Carvings (Trees and Scenes) tableau wagon was built by the Al G. Barnes Circus using carvings purchased from the Bode Wagon Co., Cincinnati, Ohio. Part of the center group of carvings, man on horse, is now at the Ringling Museum of the Circus in Sarasota, Fla., on loan from John Zweifel. Dunn Collection.

"Suddenly I was aware of an unexpected rattle of chains and a huge shadow emerging from the other shadows of the tent—the Old Man was going for a stroll! I didn't look twice but dived under the lion cage and Tusko breezed past heading for an open field behind the circus lot. He was heavily shackled and a long drag chain trailed behind him and it was knocking little clumps of weeds and puffs of dust in the air as it snaked through the dirt. As I crawled from beneath the lion cage I took care to avoid those dangerous paws. Al G. came running up with the cry, 'Help me, Jack. Let's see if we can stop him.'"

"While we collected a dozen circus hands with stakes and mauls, I noticed that the male lions had not moved but the female had rolled onto her belly and her large, amber eyes were following the broad rear end of the big bull as he moved sedately through the field.

"The first idea the proprietor had was to wait for the elephant to stop and then drive a stake into the last link of the drag chain which lay well out of reach of the troublesome bull. Mr. Barnes kept calling the big bull by his original name —'Ned.' The animal would stop and the

hands would hastily bang a stake into the ground through the last link of the drag chain. The bull would watch them finish the job and then take two or three steps and the stake would fly into the air. This continued with Tusko enjoying the sunshine, tossing dirt onto his huge back, watching the men until the stake was driven and then moving ahead until there were about 200 holes in the field.

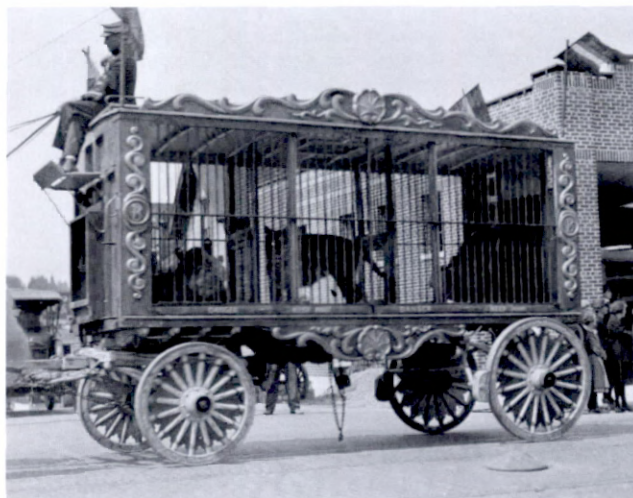
"At one side of the field a railroad track lay abandoned but with the ties and rails still intact. At one time Tusko

passed over this obstacle and Barnes had the men half-hitch the drag chain around the track. Tusko watched with apparent enjoyment until the operation was completed and then moved the rails two feet out of line. The hitch held, however, and restricted the animal's movements until the other bulls returned from parade.

"Just before the matinee, Tusko, guarded closely by Ruth and Jewel, and tailed by a troupe of weary circus hands, shuffled back into the menagerie. As the patrons arrived the only sign of the recent activity was the displaced railroad track and a field full of holes which gave the impression that all the gophers in the state had held a digging contest."

With the conclusion of McAfee's story this writer queried him about his awareness of Tusko's ever having killed a person. In agreement with many others to whom this question was put, he had never heard that the big elephant had killed a man. However, he was in agreement that Tusko had "taken a stroll" on several occasions but assured that these were rather mild—not the devastating rampages of some male ele-





Cage in Al G. Barnes parade at Olympia, Wash., May 12, 1922. Pfening Archives.



Al G. Barnes cage in parade at Olympia, Wash., May 12, 1922. Pfening Archives.

phants — Snyder, Floto, or Charlie, for example. Typical of circus folk, Jack McAfee could not recall where or when the above incident took place except that it occurred before the Barnes' Show stopped parading.

While the circus was touring the northwestern states there were no reports of its activities in *The Billboard*. During this time the show played a two-day stand in Portland, Oregon, and three days in Seattle, Washington. It then toured into eastern Washington, Oregon and into Idaho, and by 9 June was in Utah. After making the usual stands in that region it was scheduled into Wyoming, Colorado (two days at Denver), and Nebraska. It reached North Platte by 19 June. The next reports from the circus were written in early July.

The first news reported that Lotus was pulling a huge, decorated cart ridden by savages from the jungle. This tour was around the hippodrome track and Cheerful Gardner was given credit for developing this bit of entertainment. George Karmins, and his troupe of Russian singers and dancers, had joined the show. He was scheduled to sing the King's role in the spectacle, while the dancers became a feature of the concert. Prof. Arthur Wright and his band had joined for the balance of the season while the Kangaroosters continued to attract a great deal of attention with their Australian songs and dances.

It was also reported at this time that Jake Posey had departed from the show at Baker City, Oregon, and returned to his former work with the traction company in Cincinnati. Other Barnes' employees had also left and joined the Howe's Great London Circus. Among those who made this move were Bert Rickman and his wife, and Kathryn Thompson.

By the middle of the month there was a report from the two-day stand at Kan-

sas City, Missouri. The show was well received in that town and did very fine business. According to this report, Al G. Barnes spent the two days buying new wagons and additional animals. These purchases were apparently made at Horne & Son's Wild Animal Farm and the Beggs Wagon Shop. Otto Floto and Mrs. Floto (Kitty Kurger), Mr. and Mrs. Tammen, and S. M. Beggs were among the many visitors. Charley Rooney, brother of Frank Rooney, arrived from Baraboo to take charge of the ring stock. The report concluded by stating that Barnes had let a contract to the Begg's Company for twelve new wagons to be delivered as soon as possible. The new animals scheduled to arrive during the month were four black leopards, a giraffe, six elephants, a rhinoceros, and several smaller animals. (These again are inflated statements. Rex de Rosselli was the source of the announcement and he seems always to let his imagination soar.)

Another announcement from the show during the middle of July was rather unusual. Apparently there had been some misleading announcements regarding the ownership of the Al G. Barnes' Circus. The bold type of this report stated: "The Sole Owner of the Barnes' Shows Is Al G. Barnes — Al G. Barnes Only — Al G. Barnes Alone." It continued, "Through his general agent, Murray A. Pennock, Mr. Al G. Barnes requests us (*Billboard*) to deny that anyone save himself owns any part or interest in the Al G. Barnes' Shows."

From Kansas City the circus moved north into Iowa and then east to Illinois and Indiana. The route for 1922 traveled a rather irregular course wandering through the central states and toward the East. At Cambridge, Ohio, on 25 July, the show reported an attendance of 9,400. "Only in one instance did the attendance surpass that at the performance in Cambridge," the news item stated, "and that was at Seattle. The show got into town so late that only one performance could be

given, and about 4,000 people were turned away."

At the end of the month, the show was in Ohio, but had to change its route because of a railroad strike. This also may have been the reason for the dubious routing of the previous month. Charleston, Clarksburg, Huntington and Farmington, all West Virginia dates, were cancelled. Instead the circus played Marietta and Steubenville, in Ohio, and Connellsville, Pennsylvania, and Cumberland, Maryland. After two more Maryland stands, it entered Pennsylvania again for eight dates concluding with a two-day stand at Pittsburgh, August 14-15.

This successful visit to the town of big steel resulted in four turnaway performances during the two days. At both matinees the big top was packed some time before the performance began, and at the night shows capacity was reached before eight o'clock when the ticket sale was stopped and it was estimated that over 500 persons were turned away each evening. To accommodate the overflow, two rows of chairs were placed inside the guard rail and people were also accommodated three deep on tarpaulins around the hippodrome track. This was the first visit of the Al G. Barnes' Circus to Pittsburgh. There was an unfortunate incident which occurred during the loading of the trains as the show prepared to move to its next stand. A fight broke out between circus employees and some local men. As a result five of the Barnes' workers were arrested and four of them were sent to the workhouse for a month. The case of the fifth employee was dismissed. Only one of the towners drew a sentence.

Two days later the show played to two packed houses in Youngstown, Ohio. There was a delay in the short jump from East Liverpool and it was eleven o'clock before the show arrived in Youngstown. Again some dates were



changed. The show was scheduled for Akron and Elyria on the two following days, but Elyria was cancelled and the show played Canton and then Akron. The two-day stand at Cleveland followed and then four additional Ohio towns were played before the annual two-day Cincinnati stand.

The business success of 1921 when the show gave six performances in two days was not repeated but the circus did well in Cincinnati. The afternoon attendance on the Cumminsville lot on 28 August was good and at night nearly every seat in the tent was occupied. It rained heavily the next day at Norwood during the matinee, which was viewed by an audience that filled more than half of the house. Another hard rainfall came at 6:30 p.m., but, despite the threatening weather, only a few hundred seats were unoccupied. Since the new big top afforded a greater seating capacity than the one of the previous season, and, considering the bad weather and business conditions, the patronage was exceptionally large.

The crowds witnessed Al G. Barnes mounted on the giant Tusko as the huge animal lumbered around the hipodrome track; the beautifully staged spectacle, "Alice in Jungland;" Lotus harnessed to an elaborate cart, and also the thrilling wild animal acts which followed. *The Enquirer* reported a good description of the performance, which, with some changes, was similar to that of the spring opening. The report will be condensed here in order to show the new arrangement of acts and personnel. In the spectacle Richard Dixon appeared as the King. (Dixon was still King despite the earlier report of George Karmins taking his place.) Flora Bruce was the Queen in place of Bessie Harvey who had started the season in that spot. Dot Whitney continued as "Alice" while E. V. Dixon was the replacement announcer for Rickman. At the conclusion of the spec, Al G. Barnes made his greetings from the back of Tusko and Lotus pulled the cart around the track. The performance, directed by Equestrian Director Robert Thornton was as follows:

In Ring 1 Mr. Thornton handled four Arabian stallions and in Ring 3 Joe Miller had an eight-pony drill. In the arena Lorraine Wallace had a large group of African lions and Mlle. Camille had a clever troupe of Pomeranian dogs working on the track.

Elizabeth McCarthy featured the second display with "the act beautiful"—a white chariot drawn by white horses, white dogs, and white doves. (Bessie Harvey had performed this act in the spring.)

The third display had Babe Peterson in the center ring working a herd of elephants and dogs, and Dave Durant with dogs in one ring, and Rita Buchanan with ponies in the other. Capt. Drako presented the leaping greyhounds and



Three Oval Mirror Tableau, Barnes first large parade wagon, in the Al G. Barnes street parade at Olympia, Wash., May 12, 1922. Atop is a Scots bagpiper and several costumed performers. Pfening Archives.

Russian wolfhounds on the track.

Next, in the arena, was Captain Bernardi with six leopards. Capt. Drako was in one ring with performing dogs and S. C. Charles was in the other with the trained sea lions. On the track, Ova Ashworth had a troupe of trained rabbits. Also, on the track was a clown number produced by Phil King on stilts, assisted by Jack Chase.

The following display featured a lion riding an elephant in the arena—presented by Babe Peterson. The two rings had Chas. Williams and Joe Miller working wrestling bears.

Then came the big feature acts, two troupes of educated horses, twelve each, worked in two rings and handled by Merritt Belew and Austin King. In the arena Nellie Roth worked a group of pumas.

Then, in the arena, two tigers, a bear, a pony, goat and a dog were presented by Rita Buchanan. Dutch Marco worked pigs in one ring and Austin King worked a team of zebu and llamas in the other.

An act which was greatly enjoyed was the comedy walk-around by the herd of elephants, clowning; and also the comedy mule act, worked by Jack Chase in

Al G. Barnes No. 1 band riding Rhino Tableau in parade at Olympia, Wash., May 12, 1922. Joe Bradbury Collection.



one ring and Jack Harris in the other. In the arena a group of bears was handled by Charley Williams.

Flora Bruce, on the track on horseback, sang a solo, while pigeons flew from both ends of the arena and covered her and the horse. (This, too, was the old Bessie Harvey act.) On the track at the time Dutch Marco worked "Bimbo," the singing mule. He was assisted by Bill Tate.

Following this, Austin King worked four zebras in Ring. 1. In the arena Louis Roth handled a group of lions and then Pear Lingo came on with a group of lionesses.

Then Bob Thornton presented a clever equine act in the center ring; while there were ponies on revolving tables in the two end rings. These were presented by Merritt Belew and Austin King.

Thornton and Drako worked dogs and goats in the two rings, while Louis Roth presented his big Royal Bengal tiger act in the arena. This was followed by Cheerful Gardner and "fifty tons of elephants" on the track.

Then came another arena performance with Rita Buchanan presenting a lioness that rode horseback. In the rings Joe Miller presented camels and Merritt Belew worked zebras.

The famous dancing horses and dancing girls act was the next display. It was directed by Austin King and Merritt Belew. Two of the star equines were "Rex," ridden by Belew and "Yankee Doodle," ridden by Austin King. (The other riders in this great act were nearly





the same as those who performed at the opening stand in the spring.)

The famous elephant act was next on the program. Cheerful Gardner presented the seven fast-moving pachyderms in one ring while Harry Hendrickson (Highpockets Baudendistel) worked the slow-moving Tusko in the other ring. While the elephants were performing Margaret Thompson worked three lions in the arena.

Nearing the end of the program several monkeys scattered about the arena performed clever comedy stunts on the trapeze and wire. There were also a number of performing dog acts. This concluded with a fine hunting scene on the track with the horses jumping hurdles.

The performance terminated with a hippodrome race, ten horses driven by Jack Cavanaugh, and three aerial acts—Bessie Du Four with a lion in the center ring, and Ruby Fowler and Marie Pinko, with Shetland ponies in the end rings. When the latter reached the top of the canvas fireworks were exploded while the aerial platforms revolved rapidly.

Clowns working with the Al G. Barnes' Circus at this time were: Charles Post, Phil King, Dan McAvoy, Al Crooks, Bert Laurence, Chas. Fortuna, Rue Enos, Jack Klippel, Jack Harris, Lee Smith, Bill Tate, Jess Enos, Dutch Marco, Jack Chase, Bert Leo,

Al G. Barnes Cupids Air calliope (using Bode carvings) on the lot in the mid 1920's. Joe Bradbury Collection.



Al G. Barnes "other" air calliope followed by several cages in parade at Little Rock, Ark., Sept. 14, 1922. Joe Bradbury Collection.

Kinko, Louis Hensmier, "Fat" Booth, and W. L. Sheets.

The reporter from *The Enquirer* found an entertaining sideshow. Dr. Frank La Mar (new manager; Bobby Kane had departed) presented a very commendable program, diversified in nature. Dr. La Mar gave a very considerate, thought-provoking lecture and partial demonstration on the dread drug habit of smoking opium. Additional attractions were: Serpentina, freak of human nature; Frank Le Roy, Punch and Judy and inside lecturer; Mrs. W. J. Gowler, Buddha; Edna Crick, large python snakes; and Frank Decker, juggler. These were all new acts having joined at some point on the tour. The remaining attractions were: Lee Teller, magic and illusion; Frank Martin, tattooed man; and Paul Herald, the giant, all of whom had been with the show since the beginning of this tour. The closing number was Teller and Company with a vivisection illusion, which had also been on the show at the start.

The No. 2 Annex was also under the direction of Dr. La Mar—the original director, Mr. Buck, had left. The famous Pin Head Family were still the main attraction of this display.

The concert was under the direction of Jack Cavanaugh, chief of the cowboys, and furnished an entertaining program of trick and fancy roping and a

dash of acrobatics. Drew Stanfield, trick rider, featured going under the horse's neck at full gallop, and Carl Bruce, Canadian champion, exhibited a daring bucking horse ride. Bruce had an outstanding offer of \$50 to ride any outside horse brought onto the grounds. Trick roping and hurdle mule riding was performed by Ben Mouton. Chief Silver Star, bronc rider, and Agnes Nelson and Alma Owens, trick riders, completed the concert roster.

More notes from Cincinnati included the marriage of Marion McCrea and musical director, Ed. A. Woeckener. Al G. Barnes also purchased some animals from general manager, Sol A. Stephan of the local zoo. This purchase included five wild hogs, one wallaroo, a "robustus" or large kangaroo, and a water buffalo.

After the Cincinnati date the Barnes' Circus moved into Kentucky for two stands and then played four Indiana towns and two in Illinois before entering Missouri again. St. Louis was a successful three-day stand on September 8-10. The show then entered Arkansas for four dates and was soon in Louisiana. On September 23-24 it played a very rewarding two days in New Orleans. Thousands lined Canal Street to view the parade—the first of the season for the residents. The tents were packed for

Al G. Barnes elephants led by Tusko in parade. This photo is believed to have been taken at an Idaho stand in 1922. It is furnished by Fred Dahlinger Jr. and is from the Idaho Historical Society.





the four performances and many people were turned away. While in New Orleans, Manager H. A. Taylor requested the local police to arrest Sam Meyer, ticket seller, who had confiscated \$72 of the show's money.

At Baton Rouge on the 26th, the Barnes' Show gave an afternoon performance and two more at night. This was the only occasion during the season when the show gave three performances in one day. From this city the show moved to Natchez, Vicksburg, Greenville, and Clarksdale, Mississippi. A solid week of dates in Arkansas followed during the first week of October. On the 9th of October the circus entered Texas at Mt. Pleasant.

Nearly three weeks of Texas' stands followed and the show closed at Gainesville on 27 October. It made the short run to Love Field, between Dallas and Ft. Worth, to establish its winter quarters. Again, the threat of legal difficulties with his wife had been passed down as the reason that Barnes chose the site near Dallas, Texas, as a wintering spot. However, Al G. reported in *Billboard* that he was remaining in Texas because of the wide-spread railroad strikes occurring at that time. He cited his fears of being stranded somewhere in the southwestern deserts with his show and the cost of laying over before he could reach Palms, California. This writer believes that this was as definite threat (example—the problems with the railroads in the east during the summer) and feels that the "wife-trouble" excuse has been overworked.

Just as the Barnes' Circus was settling down at Love Field, the American steamship *Bearport* from Singapore, British Straits Settlements, arrived in San Pedro, the port of Los Angeles. Waiting on the dock were Harry S. Tyler, representing the Al G. Barnes' Circus; Sam C. Haller, for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus; Col. William Selig, of the Selig Zoo in Los Angeles; Messrs. Foley and Burk of the carnival by the same name; Edward Brown, representing the Sells-Floto Circus; and a Mr. Rhodes, representative of Howe's Great London Circus.

Waiting on the ship to greet these gentlemen were four tigers, two leopards, four orangutans, three gibbons, one honey bear, ten pythons, one cobra, 6,000 assorted birds, 102 monkeys, four baby elephants, ten lions, one kangaroo, and two sun bears. This was indeed a large cargo and there is little wonder at the attention it attracted.

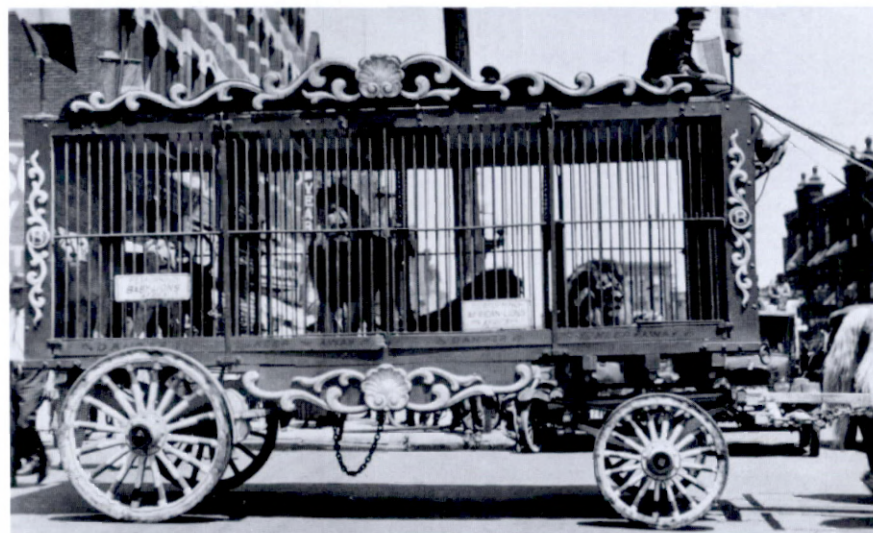
Most of these animals were already contracted for and sold to the Al G. Barnes' Circus, and were subject to Mr. Barnes' approval and selection. They were distributed as follows: the Barnes' show retained, and shipped to Circus City, Palms Calif., three of the baby elephants, two tigers, one clouded leopard, the tapir, one orangutan, and one sun bear. Barnes sold to the Dallas Zoo, and



Al G. Barnes atop the mighty Tusko. This photo was taken about 1922 when the huge elephant still had both tusks intact. Joe Bradbury Collection.

shipped to them, one baby elephant, two tigers, two leopards, one kangaroo, one sun bear, one big snake, two cassowaries, and several monkeys. The Foley & Burk Shows got two large snakes and the Westlake Pit Show on the same carnival obtained one big snake. The balance of the cargo was shipped to the Robinson Animal Farm at San Francisco. This collection of wild animals was gotten together by Frank H. Buck.

Al G. Barnes lion cage in parade. Signs attached to the cage bars read, "Performing Baby Lions" and "Performing African Lions". This photo was probably taken at a Nebraska stand in 1922. It is furnished by Fred Dahlinger Jr. and is from the Nebraska State Historical Society.



the world-famous collector of wild animals.

In December, Louis Roth and "Red" McKay made the trip to Palms from Love Field and removed all of the animals there, including the three little bulls, to the Dallas quarters. The reason "Red" McKay was involved in this transfer was that Cheerful Gardner and C. W. (Highpockets) Baudendistel had left the Barnes' Show. *Billboard* reported that the two men had gone to Miami, Florida, and were scheduled to embark for South Africa to return with twenty-seven baby African elephants for one of the important Eastern animal dealers. Since there were no imports of African elephants at this time it is very doubtful that they made the trip—but wouldn't it have been a wonderful thing if it had succeeded!

There was, however, a large influx of young Asiatic elephants into the United States during 1922. Some of the best





Lady riders followed by line of cage wagons in the Al G. Barnes parade about 1922. Joe Bradbury Collection.

known bulls in recent circus history arrived at that time. The American Circus Corporation obtained at least eleven, and possibly more, during the season and Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey imported an additional six in November. The three little elephants brought to the Love Field quarters were Venice, Culver, and Sedro, a male. The latter was obviously named after the town of Sedro-Woolly, Washington, where Tusko had taken his famous walk earlier in the year. Venice and Culver, both females, were christened after the southern California towns of the same name.

A fourth baby elephant was listed in a Barnes' magazine dated 1923. Its name was Smudge (sex undetermined). The name was a reference to the dark, gloomy fog that was generated during periods of low temperature in the extensive citrus orchards of southern California. This little pachyderm could possibly have been the animal sent to the Dallas Zoo after the arrival of the Bearport.

Bill Woodcock has furnished a photo of James Dooley, former Barnum & Bailey trainer, with four baby elephants on the Barnes' Show. It was dated 1925. Unfortunately there were no names for these elephants. There is not much

doubt that three of the four were Sedro, Culver, and Smudge. "Red" McKay, the new elephant superintendent, got rid of Venice the following June (1923) by trading her to the Milwaukee Zoo for an adult elephant named Countess. The latter died at Hot Springs, Arkansas, on 3 August 1928, while Venice, a really fine specimen, was a favorite at the Washington Park Zoo until 4 June 1953. She died from injuries resulting from a fall into the moat bordering her corral.

Culver became the possession of C. R. Holmes, animal dealer of Santa Barbara, Calif., within a year or so. He do-

Al G. Barnes cage in parade at Olympia, Wash., May 12, 1922. Pfening Archives.



Tandem horse team and line of cage wagons in the Al G. Barnes parade about 1922. Joe Bradbury Collection.

nated her to the San Diego Zoo on 11 August 1926. She was sold to the Cole Bros. Circus on 30 October 1936. A photo of this young elephant appeared in *The Los Angeles Times*, 15 March 1925, while she was still with the Barnes' Circus. The other two young bulls Sedro and Smudge, disappear after, or during the 1925 season.

Culver was listed in the files of the San Diego Zoo as a Sumatran elephant and possibly all four of the youngsters were of this sub-species.

The route book, issued by the Barnes' organization, appeared at the end of the season. It gave the season's route and a list of the people who were with the show. The season opened at Redlands, California, March 7 and terminated at Gainesville, Texas, on October 27, covering a total of 13,954 miles. The total number of performances given was 410 with 206 matinees and 204 night shows. Performances missed were: April 12 at Watsonville, California, matinee and night; July 25, Cambridge, Ohio, matinee; July 26, Wheeling, West Virginia, matinee; July 27, Parkersburg, West Virginia, matinee; August 1, Connellsville, Pennsylvania, matinee. As noted, there were three performances in one day at Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

## UNCLE GUS AND THE CIRCUS

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## Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Zoological Institute

The Zoological Institute was formed during a meeting at the Elephant Hotel in Somers, New York on January 14, 1835. Its stated purpose, as written in the articles of association, was "to more generally diffuse and promote the knowledge of natural history and gratify rational curiosity." The process of organization combined nine established menageries under a board of directors. Cash investments were also accepted. The initial capitalization, the value of the incorporated menageries plus cash, amounted to \$329,325.00, a considerable sum for that time. Each \$1,000.00 of investment bought one share of stock with additional shares valued at \$100.00 each. This method avoided the possibility of anyone participating for less than \$1,000.00.

With the recent discovery of the stock certificate in the collection of the Somers Historical Society, we now know that certificates were actually issued. Charles Wright (1792-1862), America's first lion trainer, obviously invested \$12,900.00 in the enterprise (one share at \$1,000.00 and nineteen at \$100.00). This could well have represented his part-ownership of Purdy, Welch & Co. of 1834; this menagerie was titled Purdy, Welch, Finch & Wright in 1832.

Over half of the known proprietors of the five seasons previous to the agreement (i.e., 1830-1834) were members of the Association. Thirteen of the twenty shows on the road in 1835 were part of it. The seven that were not were circuses without menageries, and even three of the owners of those signed the agreement.

The assets were turned over to the directors: James Raymond, Hiram Waring, Caleb S. Angevine, Lewis Titus and William Howe, Jr. The directors arranged and classified the animals into separate menageries and determined



### ZOOLOGICAL INSTITUTE ASSOCIATION.

It is hereby Certified, That Charles Wright  
is entitled to One Hundred & Twenty Shares in the Capital  
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on the transfer Books of the Association, by the said Charles Wright  
or Charles Wright Attorney,  
on surrender of this Certificate. And each and every Share, or part of a Share, and  
all Shares are to be transferred, taken, and held, subject to all liens, incumbrances,  
charges, and liabilities for all debts and demands, due to the Association from any former  
owner thereof, under the Articles of Association, or to which the same would be subject in  
the hands of any former owner.

In Testimony Whereof, The Secretary of the Board of Directors, hath hereunto set his hand, this  
Twenty first day of February 1895

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD,

120 Shares.

Hiram Waring Secretary.

Original owned by the Town of Somers,  
New York, Reis Collection on exhibit at the  
Somers Historical Society Museum in the  
Elephant Hotel. Illustration courtesy  
Florence S. Oliver.

their managers and routes of travel. There were four menageries that spent the winter of 1834-35 on the road and these were not part of the re-arrangement, though some were bolstered by additional animals and/or equipment.

Twelve menageries, or combination circus-menageries, opened the season as Zoological Institute shows; a thirteenth was sent into the Southeast in the fall. For the second and third sea-

sons of its existence, the Institute had only six caravans on tour. The Panic of 1837, which devastated the American economy, ended the arrangement. Three shows were auctioned in Somers in August, 1837, and the rest simply folded.

There are 135 signatures on the articles of association, thus at least that many stock certificates were issued. Only this one has surfaced. The usual pattern in such matters assures us that others will be found, as will the records of this unique corporation. The attics and store-rooms of Westchester and Putnam counties will eventually give up their treasure. —Stuart Thayer

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# BUNK ALLEN— MEMORABLE CIRCUS GRIFTER

By W. Gordon Yadon

The name, Henry "Bunk" Allen, is not indelibly recorded in the annals of circus history. A lesser known turn of the century proprietor and notorious grifter, he made no known contribution to the betterment of the circus and had his picture not appeared on the cover of the June 6, 1903 issue of *Billboard*, it's likely his flamboyant career as a showman would be deeply filed in historical obscurity.

Most published accounts of the American circus completely omit the role played by grifters, sometimes referred to as grafters, the fraternity of con men who traveled with, or followed various shows and bilked unsuspecting towners through various dishonest schemes. Allen, the subject of this sketch, certainly qualifies as one of circusdom's all-time celebrated grifters.

Henry E. Allott, who didn't change his name to Allen until he was 21, was born in Beloit, Wisconsin, January 17, 1858. His father, John Allott, a native of Yorkshire, England, came to the U.S. in 1846, but moved to Canada a year later. In 1851 he located in Beloit, Wisconsin, engaging in the grocery business. The family relocated to Delavan, Wisconsin in 1862, where the elder Allott opened a slaughter house and meat market.

Henry's mother, the former Lucy Smith, was born in Tyrone, Pennsylvania. Her father was a Lutheran minister and later a deputy collector at Fort Coulbourn, Canada. She married John Allott at Buffalo, New York in 1850. They had nine children, only three of whom, Frank, Nellie (Mrs. Fred Smith) and Henry, survived early childhood.

The parents were devout members of the Delavan Congregational church, extremely kind and charitable. Said Lucy's 1899 obituary in part: "Honesty, kindly ministrations and loving deeds endeared the Allott family to Delavan's citizenry."

It was certainly apparent to Delavans reading the obituary that the writer had no intention of including son Henry in the family eulogy. As this article will disclose, he became a black sheep and his life had no resemblance to the righteous paths followed by his parents.

Henry's indoctrination to the circus came early in life. His father provided fresh meat from his slaughter house to the various shows that quartered in Delavan at the time including the Mabie Bros. U.S. Olympic, Buckley's menagerie, Holland-Madden, Dan Castello and William C. Coup's Egyptian Caravan and the original Barnum enterprise.

Young Henry frequently accompanied his father when deliveries were made to the circus quarters. Upon reaching his 10th birthday, he was entrusted to make deliveries on his own with his father's team and wagon.



Henry E. Allott, alias Bunk Allen, as he appeared on the cover of the June 6, 1903 issue of *Billboard*. Albert Conover Collection.

Although not documented, during his delivery junkets he probably came in contact with noted circus personalities, all of whom were full or part time residents of the small village of Delavan such as Edmund and Jeremiah Mabie, the Buckley and Holland families, Stewart Craven, Pete Conklin, Poge O'Brien, J.M. Langworthy, James Melville, Walt Waterman, Oscar Hyatt, James Hutchinson, Dennison Stone, James Haight and Coup and Castello, to name a few.

It was an early relationship with the circus that formulated Henry's future. It came about during the period he made meat deliveries to the Mabie quarters where he was befriended by some of the grifters attached to the show and taught the basics, and later the con aspects of bunko. The youngster was intrigued with the "heads I win, tails you

lose" brand of bunko as dispensed by the Mabie grifters and became so obsessed with the diversion that by his puberty years he was a fairly seasoned con artist.

His proficiency at bunko soon earned him the name of "Bunk," an appellation which he carried to the grave, so hereafter he will be referred to as such.

Some tumultuous years followed for Bunk, much to the discomfort of his virtuous parents. By his 14th birthday he was six feet tall and a feared village street fighter and bully. He attended grammar school and two years of high school at Delavan during which time he frequently was in various forms of trouble ranging from fighting to gambling on school grounds. In 1875 he dropped out of school to work full time at his father's slaughter house.

His friend and associate during the 1875-1879 period was Frank Harrington, son of a prominent Delavan banker and realtor. The files of the Delavan Republican newspaper during this four year period contain numerous articles relative to Bunk and Harrington's problems with the law.

Bunk was kept under such close surveillance in Delavan that he headed for Chicago in the spring of 1879, changing his name to Allen, but returned home a short time later. The *Republican* made mention of his return in its May 10, 1879 issue as follows: "'Bunk' Allott, who has been for a month or so enjoying the high living of a Chicago boarding house, returned to Delavan on Saturday last. While there are many features about Chicago life which tempt one to linger there, yet on the whole 'Bunk' prefers the society of his friends in Delavan to Chicago."

A week later, May 17, 1879, Bunk and others were arraigned on charges of fornication as the result of a sex orgy involving a 19 year old female who was employed as a domestic at the Harrington home. The *Republican* reported the incident with the following choice words: "The scandalous indecencies which were enacted in Delavan during the forepart of the present week were so disgraceful in their nature, and fraught with such terrible danger to our sons and daughters that it seems as though a sin-hating God could not much longer endure such beastly practices."

"Scenes of Sodom were reenacted on S. Third St. where young men of 18 became fornicators and married men adulterers. 'Bunk' Allen, the well



known Chicago jail bird, was seen walking to the place of lewdness."

After a highly publicized trial at the county court house in Elkhorn, Bunk was acquitted although Harrington was found guilty and fined \$40.00. Following the trial the pair separated. Harrington remained in Delavan, completely reformed and became a prominent composer of organ music until his death in 1905 at age 46.

Bunk returned to Chicago and bought a small gambling den at the northwest corner of Clark and Monroe. At 21, he had matured into a powerful physical specimen. To appear more mature and scholarly, he always dressed in a well tailored business suit and donned a pair of spectacles he didn't need.

His gambling parlor, which preyed on downtown Chicago visitors, was an immediate success. He rapidly gained the respect of fellow cons working the Chicago scene, chiefly because of his reputation as a fearless fighter and a clever operator. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Bunk did not avoid law enforcement officers and officials but actively sought their friendship and greased their palms in return for no interference in the operation of his parlor.

He made out so well at his initial location, in 1882 he opened a new saloon-gambling den at Monroe-Green on Chicago's near west side which acquired the name, "Bucket of Blood," and became Chicago's most notorious emporium for the ensuing 20 years.

His regular clientele included fugitives, prostitutes, pick pockets, thieves and con men. Traveling crooks always headed to Bunk's place when in Chicago.

At his new location Bunk made a financial killing by fleecing out of town cattlemen and salesmen who were steered to his place by henchmen who promised the victims "plenty of action." Schemes plyed on the unsuspecting visitors included pick pocketing, passing off counterfeit money as change, crooked gambling devices and Bunk's old standby, bunko.

As stated by Walter Noble Burns, writer for the *Chicago Inter Ocean*, in a lengthy article on Bunk which appeared in the September 29, 1912 issue: "Bunk was known to traveling criminals as a right guy. He was popular among them because he was square with them. He may have been crooked with straight men but he was straight with crooked men."

In March, 1886, acting on a tip, Bunk and "Little Joe" Harris, well known Chicago thief, burglarized a west side mansion and made off with over \$80,000 in jewelry, mostly diamonds. Following a clean getaway, Bunk took the loot to his hideaway at Hollister's Log Cabin resort on the north shore of Delavan lake, about 85 miles northwest of Chicago while Harris headed for Canada, with a mutual understanding that



BUCKSKIN BILL.

## BUCKSKIN BILL'S WILD WEST SHOW CO.

A CORPORATION.

H. E. ELLIOTT, MANAGER.

ADVANCE DEPARTMENT CONTRACT.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT, Made and entered into this 31 day of Oct 1902  
by and between BUCKSKIN BILL'S WILD WEST SHOW CO. (a corporation), party of the first part, and  
Harry Johnston party of the second part:

WITNESSETH: That the party of the second part hereby agrees to render services to the said party of the first part, at all times and at such places as the party of the first part may direct, during the season of 1902 commencing on or about the 1st day of April, 1903

The said services shall be first class in every particular, and consist of, viz:

Bill (as is)

This advance department contract of the 1902 Buckskin Bill's Wild West Show Company, lists H.E. Elliott as manager. The spelling of the name suggests a second alias used by Allen. Pfening Archives.

following a cooling off period, the gems would be peddled and the money split.

Bunk had hardly settled in his cabin at Delavan lake when word was received from his Chicago business base that police officials from that city were on the way to question him about the burglary. Hurriedly he hired 14 year old Roy Hollister, son of the proprietor, to take him out on the lake in a boat. After anchoring a short distance off shore, Bunk carefully marked the spot and dropped the stolen loot overboard.

Late that evening police arrived with a warrant for Bunk's arrest, but following a return trip to Chicago, was released on lack of evidence. Harris was

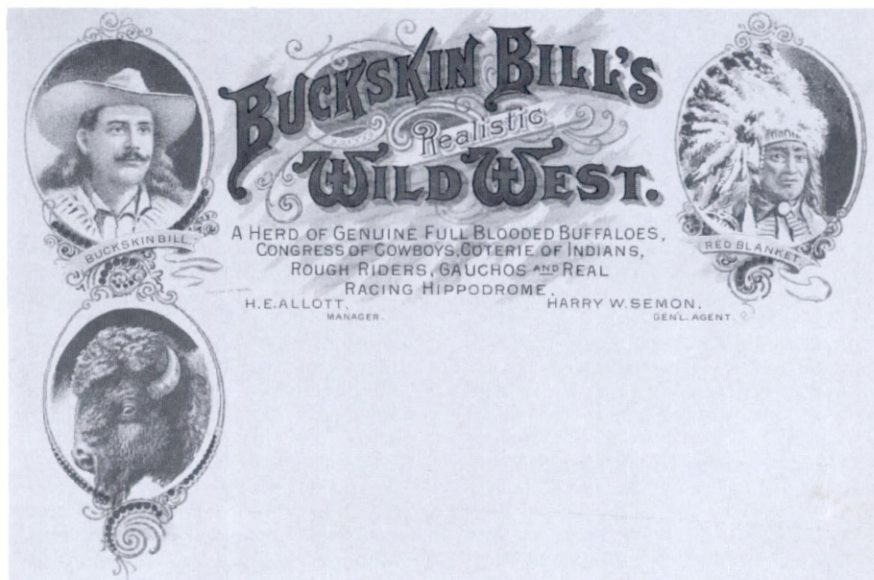
The Erie Litho Co. designed this letterhead for the 1902 Buckskin Bill's Wild West show. The title is gold outlined in blue, the illustrations are brown. Pfening Archives.

arrested in Canada a week later and returned to Chicago where he was convicted and sentenced to a year at the Joliet penitentiary, where he mysteriously died a month short of completing his sentence.

According to Hollister, Bunk, over a 15 year period, made several unsuccessful attempts to recover the jewelry cache by renting a boat, dropping anchor at the approximate spot and diving into the 12 foot water depth in search of the \$80,000 loot.

As late as 1961, while Hollister was still living, he had a professional scuba diver, Rudy Lange, search the silted bottom at the supposed spot Bunk had dropped the jewels in 1886, but even with the assistance of an underwater metal detector, Lange abandoned the search after three days as nearly three feet of hydro soil had accumulated on the lake's bottom since the jewels were deposited.

Following his acquittal, Bunk continued business as usual in Chicago, gaining more respect than ever from the underworld element. He also fostered friendships with highly respected and





influential Chicago businessmen including John M. Smyth, the city's leading furniture dealer, and Val Hoffman, youthful millionaire brewer, who later became Bunk's financial angel in circus proprietorship. By greasing the palms of precinct police officers and patrolmen on the beat, Bunk experienced few problems at his noted business site.

He also attempted to upgrade his reputation by barring low grade, run of the mill thieves and cons from his place and even assisted the police in ridding the neighborhood of gutter type crooks. He wanted his emporium to look respectable to the victims brought there and had his henchmen dressed in clean suits. He also was strongly opposed to the use of firearms and banned them in his place. This is substantiated in another part of Burns' 1912 article, which stated: "He was a stickler for refined methods. Bunk looked upon the mask, black jack and revolver as relics of medieval barbarism. He associated only with high class crooks and con men."

In the late 1880's, Bunk realized the lucrative potential when circuses and other traveling amusements played Chicago dates. He organized a top echelon of pick pockets and con men to work these stands. Some of the high class cons who worked for Bunk at one time or another included: St. Louis Williams, Paddy Murphy, Frank Baker, John Talbot, Sam Wineman and "The Big Swede."

When a show arrived in Chicago Bunk boldly approached the management and openly announced that his crew would be working the lot. Dressed immaculately like a leading politician and accompanied by a police officer who was in on the take, and several of his strong arm henchmen, Bunk would emphatically inform the owner that if the performance was to go on without incident, certain privileges would be conducted by his men. Few, if any, were known to have called his bluff and his boys moved in on circus day.

One of Bunk's most rewarding years was 1893 when the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago from May 1 to October 30. His boys worked the fair grounds and his saloon never enjoyed brisker business. As Burns reported: "The World's Fair period was tops for Bunk as countless visitors were steered to his place where they were rolled, bunkoed or both."

A few years later, for diversion, Bunk, during the warm weather months, would leave his Chicago base and follow circuses routed in the midwest plying his bunko specialty, frequently in the company of John Talbot.

One of the few known times that Bunk got taken was in 1901, when *Billboard* reported it in its March 16, 1901 issue:

"Bunk" Allen Bunkoed

"Bunk" Allen, generally conceded to be Chicago's bunko king, has been

bunkoed. What makes the thing intolerable to Allen is the fact that he met his Waterloo in Indiana, the bunko man's paradise. Not only that, but the man who fleeced him did it in the guise of an innocent Hoosier who was considered by Bunk to be easy money.

Allen's bank account was shortened \$900 by his experience, parting with the money in Elkhart, where he went to see that a certain mark was properly skinned. In his saloon, March 3, Allen told how he came to be bunkoed as follows:

"Well this here fellow Talbot was a friend of mine. He's an old time grafter. All last summer he and I followed a circus. We skinned suckers together all season traveling in a private car. I allowed him to handle the money and I did the fixing. I never counted the money but sometimes he handled as much as \$5000 in one day.



"After he split square on that deal I thought of course he was on the level when he comes to me with a proposition to go down to Indiana and trim a mark. When I get down there I was introduced by Talbot to two strangers. One of them was (Charles) McMurtly and the other was supposed to be a handy pasteboard mixer. Well we fixed up a faro layout and we put this sticky fingered guy to dealing. Everything went lovely and I blew into the game at the right time, but I noticed the mark was unusually game. I suspected something then but Talbot said it was just like getting money from home so I touted the mark along at a racy pace, but when the blow-off came, I lost. I nearly dropped dead for there was about \$2000 on the board.

"Of course the mark quit the game. I asked Talbot what he meant by letting the sucker get my money and he said that the dealer had accidentally got his dates mixed and I slipped the wrong card out of the box. I tried to get the sucker in the game again, but he was too wise, so I came home.

"But that wasn't the funny part of it. At first I thought it was an accident, but after rubbering around I found that it was all a put-up game. Talbot had it fixed with the mark to split with him but the mark was a

wise guy and kept every cent of it. He's a rat that Talbot. When I had him arrested he says, 'Come on Bunk and be a good fellow. You have plenty of friends, let's go out and skin them.'"

Having followed circuses for several years as a grifter, in 1902, Bunk decided it was time to own his own show. He induced his millionaire friend and brewing magnate, Val Hoffman, to join a triple partnership, with J.C. O'Brien as the third member, in purchasing the Buckskin Bill Wild West show from the Terrell brothers. The youthful Hoffman even vacated his executive office at the brewery to travel with the newly acquired circus as treasurer, apparently captivated by Bunk's free wheeling life style which sharply contrasted his own.

For some reason Bunk utilized his given name of Allott when he assumed managership of the Buckskin Bill show, possibly because the Allen monicker was associated with his unsavory Chicago reputation.

Bunk had remained single during his then 44 years, but after taking over the 1902 wild west enterprise, immediately became infatuated with a pretty female named Ollie, who assisted in the ticket wagon. They were married during the early part of the season. Thereafter Bunk always referred to his wife as "Buckskin," since he met her on the show of the same name.

Very little has ever been written on the Buckskin Bill Wild West show of 1902. We are indebted to some prolific writer, possibly press agent John A. Leahy or general agent Harry W. Semon, who pipe lined copy to *Billboard* throughout the season, conveying interesting items about the show. Whoever the stringer was, he did not practice selectivity as many of the items were not exactly complimentary to the Allott-Hoffman-O'Brien grift-laden enterprise, which was framed in Paducah, Kentucky.

John F. Polacsek has a railroad contract entered between the Buckskin Bill show and the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Co., Louisville, Kentucky, dated April 2, 1902. The contract was for movement of the show to 19 cities in Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee between May 10 and June 6, at a cost of about \$150.00 per jump, further stating the show traveled on its own 16 cars, six flat, one baggage, one box, two sleepers and six stock.

Before the show opened in May, additional cars were added if the May 10, 1902 *Billboard* article is correct, which stated: "Buckskin Bill Wild West opened its season here (Paducah) May 3. A large crowd was in attendance. The parade was a notable feature. The Mexicans, Cossaks, Indians and cowboys and people of all nations made a neat showing.

"Buckskin Bill travels in 22 70-foot cars made up of 10 flats, 6 stock, 2 bag-



gage, 3 sleepers and 1 private hotel occupied by the managerial staff. There also are two handsome advance cars just built.

"The managerial staff is as follows: H.E. Allott, manager, J.C. O'Brien, director, V. Hoffman, treasurer, Harry W. Semon, general agent and railroad contractor, John A. Leahy, press agent, W.E. Sands, manager, advance car #1 with 22 men; W.L. Shewell, local contractor; George A. Florida, manager, advance car #2 with 14 men; William Dons, privileges; George Fischer, 24-hour man, and the side show with director Lew Nichols is especially attractive. The new managers of the show wish it understood that the Terrell brothers are in no way connected with the company, H.E. Allott & Co. having brought the property outright."

Route listed—Henderson, Kentucky, May 7—Cloverport, 8—Owensboro, 9—Evansville, Indiana 10—Mt. Vernon 12—Madison, Kentucky 13—Hopkinsville, 14—Russellville, 15—Clarksville, Tennessee 16—Springfield, 17—Nashville, 19.

Although primarily concerned with grift, Bunk took a keen interest in the Buckskin Bill performance, utilizing only wild and untrained equine stock and fearless, colorful riders. The following, which appeared in the June 7, 1902 *Billboard* is supportive of Bunk's desire for a thrilling show: "The Buckskin Bill Wild West is doing a big business in Tennessee. William Doris was riding in the stage coach during one of the performances last week and received a charge of buckshot in the leg. While the wound is not serious, is very painful.

"Charles Tomkins also suffered a fall and dislocated his shoulder. Archie Phileron, who is recovering from his accident of some weeks ago, also visited the show. Mary Cody's saddle broke during a recent performance, causing her to fall and dislocate her hip. Archie Booker with his performing dogs and monkeys and Prof. Reed's colored band and cake walkers are pleasing the patrons."

From Kentucky and Tennessee, the show was routed east, playing Huntington, West Virginia, June 20, Baltimore, Maryland, July 2-3, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, July 9-10, Wheeling, West Virginia, July 11, Newark, Ohio, 12, Columbus, 14-15, and Mansfield, 18.

Before leaving Kentucky, the show experienced considerable trouble as stated in the July 28, 1902 *Billboard*: "The Buckskin Bill Wild West was the scene of a small sized riot at Maysville, Kentucky, June 17. The trouble occurred between the Indians and cowboys of whom several suffered broken bones.

"Charles Johnson of Cincinnati, who recently joined the show, was admitted to the hospital, June 17, suffering from internal injuries and lacerations caused

by being thrown from a bronco at Vanceburg, Kentucky. The animal has a record of killing three men.

"Some of the cowboys and Indians connected with the show have been arrested for the alleged kidnapping and criminal assault of a young girl while making a stand in Vanceburg. It is alleged the men incarcerated the girl in a van on board one of the cars and reportedly humiliated her during the night. The men are now safely in jail at Catlettsburg, Kentucky, and a mob is now feared. The girl, is the pretty daughter of a farmer, is in a precarious condition."

The following are other items gleaned from the 1902 *Billboard* relevant to the show:

June 21—"Henry E. Allott, J.C. O'Brien and Val Hoffman, proprietors of the Buckskin Bill Wild West, feeling that the instantaneous success of their exhibition is due largely to the excellence of the work of their advance force under the guiding hand of Harry W. Semon, their general agent, and being elated over a recent railroad deal that Mr. Semon has just consummated, have presented him with a handsome solid gold watch and chain."

July 19—"Del Tengo, the famous clown, is with the Buckskin Bill Wild West show."



August 30—"Henry E. Allott, better known to the profession as Bunk Allen, one of the proprietors and also manager of the Buckskin Bill Wild West exhibition, and his charming wife, contemplate a trip to Europe at the end of the season.

"John Reynolds has succeeded William J. Doris as manager of privileges. J.C. O'Brien is no longer interested in the show—his interest having been purchased by Mr. Val Hoffman, the young Chicago millionaire brewer.

"The show has done a phenomenal business since it crossed the Missouri river. In less than two weeks it has cleared a little over \$10,000. At Leavenworth, Kansas, following only two days after the Campbell Bros. show, it played to enormous biz.

"An entire new spread of canvas has been made by the Murray tentmaker of Chicago and will be used for the first time at Great Bend, Kansas, August 25. Ernest Albright has closed a 3 month engagement as calliope player with the show."

Early September route: Caldwell, Kansas, September 2, Anthony, 3; Med-

ford, Oklahoma 4, Arkansas City, Kansas, 8; Perry, Oklahoma, 9; Guthrie, 10; Stillwater, 11; Perkins, 12; Oklahoma City, 13.

The show was routed into Texas for most of October where *Billboard* reported: "Buckskin Bill's Wild West did record breaking business at Fort Worth-Dallas, notwithstanding heavy opposition from Buffalo Bill and Ringling Bros., as both shows were heavily billed for October 10-13 at Fort Worth and October 10-14 at Dallas." The final *Billboard* reference to the show in 1902 was stands at Fredricktown, Arkansas on November 7, and DeSoto, November 8.

From all available information, Bunk and Hoffman made out extremely well financially with the 1902 show, which quartered in Fort Worth, while the proprietors returned to Chicago with enthusiasm for a new show the following season.

While Bunk was traveling with his show, things were still lively as usual at his Chicago saloon, as indicated by the following article appearing in the September 18, 1902 issue of the *Delavan Republican*: "Bunk Allott's notorious place in Chicago has again gained notoriety through the bold holdup of a priest who was enticed in there Friday night. Rev. Father Brucek, a country priest of Hooppole, Henry Co., Illinois, went for a walk and was induced to enter the Allen resort, where he was set upon and not only his roll of bills, amounting to \$150 and gold watch and chain taken, but his change, even to the pennies, his papers, spectacles and key to his parish house. The act was performed in the presence of three or four men who made no move in his behalf. 'Allen,' as he is known in Chicago, is out of the city, being with a circus somewhere in Iowa."

The year 1903 was a memorable one for Bunk. With his previous season's experience and success with the Buckskin Bill operation, he framed a new show with the lengthy title, "The Great Cole Younger and Frank James Historical Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World."

The stars of the show, Cole Younger and Frank James need no introduction to anyone with a basic knowledge of late 19th century American history. As members of the well chronicled James gang, they participated in the infamous raid on the bank at Northfield, Minnesota, September 7, 1876, for which the outlaws paid dearly. Following the ill-fated robbery attempt, Younger was wounded 11 times when surrounded by a posse in a swamp outside of Madelia. Captured, tried and convicted, he was sentenced to life imprisonment at Stillwater prison.

Frank James, brother of Jesse, escaped the Northfield ambush and eventually got back to Missouri, where he surrendered to authorities and remarkably was spared a prison term. The



names. Younger and James were household words throughout America in 1903 when Bunk contacted them about joining his show.

There was one problem with Younger's role. When paroled from Stillwater, it was stipulated that he could never appear in an exhibition where admission was charged. However he was free to travel with a show and lend his name to the title, providing he didn't perform. James was under no such restriction.

Some interesting notes on the 1903 Younger-James Wild West was obtained in a 1971 interview with John W. Allott, Bunk's nephew, who had retired to Delavan after spending 45 years in Chicago in the meat business. When I first contacted Allott (1892-1974) I thought he might be reluctant to talk about his uncle's questionable career, but on the contrary, graciously answered questions and provided considerable information on the 1903 show. Some of the pertinent content of the interview follows:

"Although I was only 11 at the time, I dropped out of school and traveled with Bunk's Cole Younger-Frank James show the first month it was on the road. . . . The show was put together in Chicago in April of 1903; most of the equipment had been used on the Buckskin Bill Wild West the previous year and was wintered in Texas. Bunk had a silent partner named Hoffman, who was a brewer in Chicago and whenever money was needed, Hoffman came through. The show owned about 15 railroad cars which came to Chicago from Texas on the Santa Fe tracks. One of the cars was beautifully painted and lettered with pictures of Cole and Frank. We didn't have a big top and performances were held in the open with sidewalling.

"I never knew for sure but think Bunk got Cole and Frank by offering each 25 percent of the net profit. Bunk kept all the grift money himself and we had plenty of grift on the show. My father, Frank, who was Bunk's brother, was one of the advance agents and bill posters for the show. He also checked every town before the show arrived to see if the sheriff or constable could be bought. Usually they would accept a payoff and our grifters could operate without any trouble, but sometimes we would play a stiff town or one that had been raked by grifters on another show, and then we would have to go Sunday school.

"It was a real rough and tough gang that traveled with the show with fights all the time. The cowboys from the Dakotas were the worst as they got drunk every day and would fight each other. The Mexican riders from Texas looked real mean but they stayed by themselves most of the time and didn't cause much trouble. The Sioux Indians were always a problem for Bunk as he had to sign special papers to have them travel with the show. They weren't sup-

posed to drink liquor but some of them managed to get it, and when they did, they got real wild.

"Sober or drunk we always put on a show that excited the people. The performance was real wild and we never knew what was going to happen. Most of the horses were not broken and dangerous—in fact if a horse ever showed any signs of gentleness, Bunk would trade it off. Most of the performance was riding, roping, shooting and the usual cowboy-Indian stuff. Sometimes the show would get so wild that towners would get scared and leave. All the riders wanted to outdo each other and always went all out to please. I know that two riders were killed during the season and many others badly injured.

## MURFREESBORO TUESDAY JUNE... 2<sup>nd</sup>

### THE GREAT COLE YOUNGER and FRANK JAMES HISTORICAL WILD WEST

The World's Greatest Exhibition Embracing  
Hero Horsemen of all Nations.

The Great Wild West and Far East  
Now Mounted Hand-in-Hand, Note the Endless Array of Stirling  
Attractions.



Indians, Cubans, Western Girls, Mexicans, Broncos, Overland Stage Coach, Emigrant Train, The Siege of Deadwood, and The World's Mounted Warriors, led by the Great Cole Younger and Frank James, will personally appear at every performance.

Two Performances Daily, 2 and 8 p. m. Rain or Shine  
Watch for the Big Free Street Parade at 10 a.m.  
Excursion Rates on all Railroads.

This ad for the Younger and James show appeared in the Murfreesboro, Tenn., newspaper advertising the stand in that city. Pfening Archives.

"The Buffalo Bill show was a lot bigger than ours but people who saw both, said ours was more exciting to watch. Guess it was because we didn't know ourselves what would happen once the performance started. We had a good parade which was led by Frank James; all the riders were in the parade and it ended with a calliope. Our Negro band had about 10 members and they played good music. We always got people to the lot by the free cannon act. Bunk operated the spring levers on the cannon which once backfired and he broke a bone in his leg. His wife, Buckskin, took tickets and knew exactly what the receipts should be. Bunk collected the receipts and kept it locked in his compartment.

"After we left Missouri and headed east, my father sent me back to Chicago. I think he knew things were going to get rougher and didn't want me to get mixed up in any clemis."

The June 6, 1903 *Billboard* featured

Bunk on its cover, using his given name of H.E. Allott, and reported the following on the Younger-James Wild West: "Opened in Chicago, April 29, then to Missouri. Did enormous business in May with side show doing \$1800-\$2000 weekly. Following personnel on show: H.E. Allott, proprietor, with Cole Younger and Frank James; Joe Gasman, Tom Fay handle work force; Happy Hooligan (O.W. Courtney) and Alabama Sextett, side show; Mrs. D.V. Tantlinger, shooting; Joe Lynch and Lee Bowers, roping; Mrs. H.E. Allott and Dan McCartney, paste boards and front door; Salvail, Jimmy McNulty and Doc Emerson, side show orators; Lew Nichols, opening of concert announcements; Lizzie Blondel, outside free cannon act; Mitch Goldsmith, private car, Jack Applehouse, big show tickets; W.H. Jacobs, side show conductor; cowboys under leadership of Jack Joyce; Capt. Sharp of the U.S. 6th Cavalry, member of Col. Roosevelt's charge up San Juan Hill; Ellis Jordan in charge of Cossacks, C.B. Gantling, sharp shooting; Sioux Indians, Australians, Mexicans and Fred Castle, calliope. O.P. Phillips, press agent on #1 car, H.C. Barnes, secretary and James Snyder, boss bill poster."

After opening in Chicago, the new show played several dates around the Windy City before launching its tour at Galesburg, Illinois, May 4. Before covering the show's 1903 route, Lew D. Nichols penned a letter to *Billboard* in 1922 which provides additional insight on Bunk's Younger-James operation. Said the letter in part: "I was with the Cole Younger-Frank James Wild West Show when it organized in Chicago. It played the lots of Chicago without any graft and cleaned up \$15,000; then took to the road and I begged Hoffman and Allen not to have any graft. With graft, it was parading crime."

The *Galesburg Press* was not too complimentary with the following which appeared in its May 4, 1903 edition: "The sheriff's force and the police do not like the looks of the show and have kept an active watch today to prevent crime. The street parade and general appearance of the outfit is not reassuring, either from the standpoint of an officer or a spectator.

"Fred Castle, the old Galesburg showman, is here today with his calliope with this company. The show had difficulty in getting out of Chicago where they were attached for a bill due to harnesses and saddles amounting to \$1,297. The claim was finally settled with a deputy sheriff and the company allowed to start for Galesburg.

"Frank James, who twenty years ago was known the country over as a member of the famous band of Missouri outlaws, is today, in every respect, apparently a good citizen. He is tall and of a rather slight build, and although 60 years of age, looks much younger.





His piercing eyes show indomitable courage.

"Cole Younger, who is the senior member of the show firm, is well known wherever newspapers circulate. In appearance he is tall and heavy set and looks like a man capable of doing daring deeds. When paroled from the Minnesota state penitentiary, where he was sent for bank robbery, his word was given that he would not appear in an exhibition where an admission was charged. Accordingly, he does not now appear either in the parade or in the arena during the show."

By the middle of May the Younger & James show was in Kansas. The Floto Shows United offered opposition to the wild west show and the two crossed paths in Missouri and Kansas early in the 1903 season. Orin C. King in his *Bandwagon* article on the 1903 Floto show relates that the Cole Younger & Frank James Historical Wild West played Ft. Scott, Kansas on May 15, and Floto followed five days later. When the Floto show was in Springfield, Missouri, a gang from the Younger & James aggregation went through the Floto train and stole several gold watches, money and anything else they could get their hands on.

The June 13, 1903 *Billboard* contained the following on the show: "The Cole Younger-Frank James Wild West show packed them in afternoon and evening at Nashville, Indiana in a drenching rain. Cole Younger is making friends wherever the show goes and at every town inhabitants are wild to shake hands with him and Frank James. P.A. Dutch, cowboy tattooer, and his wife, Nellie, are with the show and making good. Ernie Ruble and Lillie Mulde handle song books. George Hoffman has knife board; Jack Royer, Joe Lynch and Jack Taylor, ropers, are receiving much applause. Lew Nichols has a number of privileges. Show is doing enormous business."

The show played Washington, D.C.,

**The only known photo of the Cole Younger and Frank James Wild West show is this one with all of the side show attractions posed in front of the bannerline. Pfening Archives.**

July 2, and then was routed into Virginia, where some apparent trouble took place as indicated by the following in the July 11, *Billboard*: "The Younger-James Wild West was not allowed to give a night performance in Richmond, Virginia as the officials of Henrico county maintained that the performance would offer serious risk to the peace of the community."

The show played Pennsylvania dates in mid-July. *Billboard's* July 25 issue reported: "All the people on the Younger-James Wild West visited graves of the circus people killed in the Walter L. Main wreck at Tyrone, Pennsylvania. Col. Harry Hamilton delivered a very beautiful oration over the graves."

An excellent review of the show appeared in the *Wheeling, West Virginia Intelligencer*, July 30, 1903, and apparently grift wasn't utilized for this stand: "A great show. Cole Younger didn't appear but Frank James did. Capacity crowd both times. Many curious to see the one time outlaws. Was one of the most meritorious attractions of its class ever seen here, although not the largest. The program treated western life, military maneuvers, expertness in handling firearms and weapons and customs and habits of the noble red man. The show arrived at daylight from New Cumberland, at once removing to the show lot where management was faced with problem of placing large canvas on limited ground.

"At 10 AM the parade started from the lot, Frank James in carriage, drawn by a pair of spirited horses. He was given an ovation along the line. Other displays in the parade were Sioux and other Indians, Mexicans, cowboys, Cossacks, Australians and soldiers of na-

tions. The American detachment of soldiers were frequently cheered. There were the inevitable stage coach, 3 bands and a steam calliope.

"Performance opened with review of fighting men of all nations, headed by Frank James; Congress of all nations; cowboys under leadership of Jack Joyce; detachment of U.S. soldiers under command of Capt. Sharp of U.S. Sixth Cavalry, member of Roosevelt's Rough Riders, in charge up San Juan Hill. Later in performance gave a clever drill as example of rough riding. Ellis Jordan had charge of the Cossacks.

"C.B. Gantling and wife—clever sharp shooting and Mexicans gave performance of broncho busting rarely equalled with traveling organizations. Animals were full of fire and several had spills. One animal kicked himself entirely out of his saddle and rider, while another took off downfield, shot through the canvas at the end of the enclosure, brushed the rider off on a guy rope and continued, still bucking, up behind a row of seats. Also a group of Australian bolo and boomerang throwers did good work. Mr. James appeared twice during the performance but Mr. Younger did not perform at all. Rarely is a show conducted on such clean lines. Chief Reitz reported no pickpockets and other thieves with the show.

"All acts were cleverly done; cowboys expert with lariat, mimic battles and attacks of cowboys and Indians—excitement transferred one from busy industrial city of Wheeling back to half century ago to wild and woolly West where acts were enacted in reality. Cole Younger stated the star bucking pony had killed one of the cowboys last week. Show has been to Newport News, Virginia, where officers of foreign vessels enjoyed the performance."

According to the August 8, 1903 *Billboard*, the following members of the show were taken into the Eagles lodge at Titusville, Pennsylvania on July 21: Michael Goldstine, James Phalen, Frank Flaraty, Joe Lynch, John Sully, Capt. W. Sharp, A.W. Courtney, James McNulty, J. McGindley, Thomas Stryker, Eddie Quirk, James Gorman, Frank Quinn, Billie Taylor and Len Felsenner.

When the show played Lexington, Kentucky, August 15, Younger and James were dinner guests of Capt. Oliver Redd, who served in the same confederate command with them during the Civil War.

If the October 3, 1903 *Billboard* article is factual, Younger and James could no longer tolerate Bunk's grift-laden show and departed under the following circumstances: "Cole Younger and Frank James severed their connection with the wild west aggregation which has borne their names. The conduct of the show people was such that Younger refused to remain with the show. He tried to suppress the grifters who were



following the show, under the eyes of the management, but could not.

"Damage suits were filed against the managers, and as a sequel, warrants were gotten out by the management for the arrest of Younger and two attaches on charges of embezzling \$5000. Judge Eaton, Younger's attorney, was asked for a statement regarding the arrest of Younger and stated:

'Younger, by contract, was to receive 25 percent of profits as general manager. He was authorized to appoint the treasurer and he did so, appointing his nephew, Harry Hall. Because of the grifters on the show, Younger severed his connection with it. Hall also quit as treasurer, turning over \$5000 to Younger, the general manager. There is no embezzlement in the case. Younger is simply holding the money until the matter is settled.' "

After Younger and James left the show, Bunk continued to use their names and impersonated Younger during the performance in the stage coach robbery episode. He closely resembled Younger in physical appearance and apparently got away with it during the final days of the season.

*Billboard* of October 24, 1903 reported: "The Cole Younger-Frank James Wild West show is in winter quarters at Fort Worth, Texas. This probably means the permanent closing of the show."

According to Bunk's nephew, the damage suit against Younger was settled out of court and most of the \$5000, plus some diamonds not mentioned in the *Billboard* article, recovered; the property and other assets of the show then sold to a group fronted by J.C. O'Brien.

Bunk reportedly made good money with the Younger-James Wild West, using some of it to purchase a basement saloon at Monroe and Dearborn and the Alhambra hotel on Wabash, in Chicago's loop.

Bunk remained out of the circus business for the next six years but made news on June 2, 1904, when the *Chicago Chronicle* reported a court appointed receiver, Henry L. Wilson, informed Allen that bankruptcy proceedings had been filed against the assets of the Buckskin Bill Wild West by the American Posting Service and the Kansas City Bill Posting Co., to which Bunk replied, "I don't own a cent's worth of property in the show—I transferred all my holdings in it." The outcome of the case is not known.

On August 13, 1907, Bunk made the front page of the *Delavan Republican* with the following: "Henry E. Allott, now known as Bunk Allen, formerly of Delavan, now proprietor of the Alhambra saloon at 19th and State in Chicago, was arrested on a charge of manslaughter in connection with the sudden death of Grover Cleveland Vaughn, a Lake Shore brakeman.



Drawings of Cole Younger and Frank James appeared on a herald used by the 1903 show. Pfening Archives.

"Mrs. Luchy Vaughn, wife of Vaughn, testified that on July 23, at 11.30 o'clock, she was drinking at a table with another woman, when her husband entered the Alhambra saloon and told her to come home. He dragged her from the table and then Bunk interfered. He placed his hands against Vaughn's shoulders and thrust him out a pair of swinging doors. Vaughn fell forward on his hands but recovered himself. Two hours later he was found dead at 1926 S. State St. Allen was released following the hearing by Justice Prindiville."

No further action was taken against Bunk and he resumed business as usual at his saloon. On June 25, 1908, he engaged in another brawl which the *Republican* reported as follows: "Bunk Allott, well known in Delavan, is stated by

Allen must have planned to tour again in 1904 using the Buckskin Bill title as this new letterhead by Erie is dated that year. It is identical to the 1903 Luella Forepaugh Fish Wild West letterhead except for the title. Even Harry W. Semon, general agent, appeared on the Forepaugh Fish paper. The title is in red with a gold outline, the illustrations are black. Pfening Archives.

Chicago papers to have received serious injuries in a brawl at a west side saloon, Monday, in which he had an eye so badly gouged that it is thought he will lose the sight."

However he recovered satisfactorily, resumed his saloon business and in 1910, in partnership with another Chicago grifter, George Little, bought Danny Robinson's 18 car circus, after unsuccessfully attempting to purchase the Pan-American Shows the previous year.

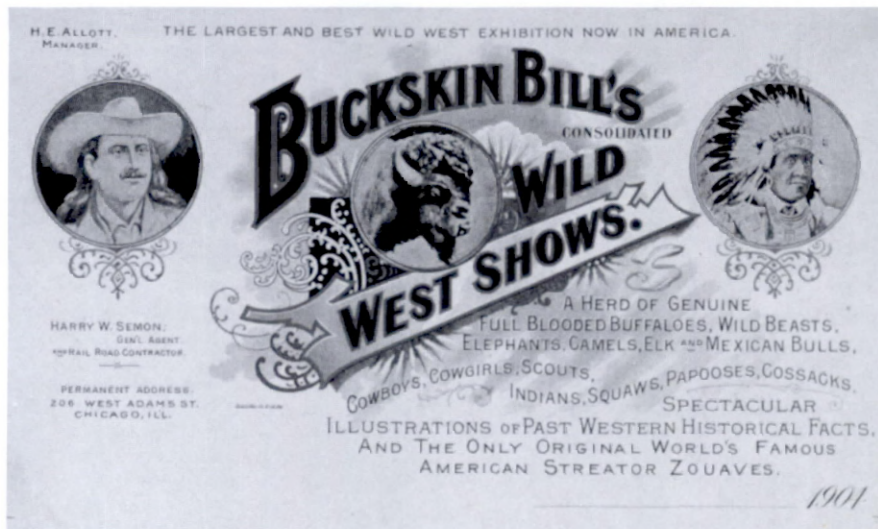
It is not known how Robinson, a legitimate and respected owner, ever got mixed up with Bunk, and the association was far from a compatible one as we will see.

Information on the 1910-11 Robinson show is not abundant. The most meaningful reference to the operation appeared in the May-June 1973 *Bandwagon* when Tom Parkinson compiled many of the papers of William P. Hall, one of which clearly exhibited the problems Robinson was having with Bunk. John A. Barton, who traveled with the show, seemed desperate when he wrote Hall:

"Mr. Allen says Mr. Little lost his mind and tried to kill a couple of police and got shot himself and is in bad shape."

Parkinson inserted the following in the article: "It was Barton's opinion that Bunk Allen would sell the show to Hall. He can't get along with Robinson, Barton wrote in, urging Hall to come and buy the show. He would arrange for Hall to meet Allen in a hotel away from the show and nobody would know. 'For God's sake, Hall, come on!' he wrote, in a letter dated June 26, 1911.

"Then Robinson himself wrote to Hall about the other side of the troubles. He said they had a big week's business and had over \$8000 in the bankroll, yet Robinson 'cannot get Bunk Allen to pay anyone. He has promised to send you \$1000. He will get out [of the partnership] for \$13,000, and I am trying to get







someone to buy. Little went crazy and shot several people. We got him out okay and he is in Chicago. If Bunk had his money and I had someone else, I could bet a big lot of money this year.' "

From the above it is quite clear that Bunk presided over the Robinson circus with a domineering hand. According to his nephew, the usual gift was attached to the show and Bunk came out a financial winner even though his associates didn't.

Bunk, recalling the excitement in the performances of his 1903 Younger-James Wild West, utilized similar acts on the Robinson show in 1910-11, including the grand title, "Robinson's German Menagerie Three Ring Circus and King Bros. I.X.L. Ranch Wild West." The bills boasted 50 cowboys, 12 cowgirls, troupes of Cossacks and U.S. Cavalry, Jack King, champion

The 1911 route cards of the Robinson's Famous Shows carried Danny Robinson's photo. The cards were the same small size as reproduced here. Pfening Archives.

Allen's 1911 Robinson's Famous Shows letterhead was illustrated with a photo of Danny Robinson, the original owner. It is printed in blue. Pfening Archives.

lasso and lariat twirler and the DeCosta family trapeze act.

In addition to Bunk, Little and Robinson in managerial capacity, the show listed G.C. Moyer as general agent. Rollin V. Mallory, press agent, J.B. McMahon (son of 19th century grifter Joe McMahon, who was shot and killed in Wichita in 1897), privileges, and George D. Steele, fixer.

The 1911 season of the Robinson Famous Shows opened on May 1 for a two day stand in Nashville, Tennessee. The circus traveled on sixteen cars, seven flats, one elephant car, two stock cars, all sixty feet long. There were four seventy foot sleepers and one fifty-six foot long private car. One advance car was used.

The show played in Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Iowa, and Missouri, and folded in Morganfield, Kentucky on August 31, 1911. W.C. Bayland was appointed receiver who sold the show on September 27, in Morganfield to Fiss, Doerr & Carroll Horse Co., of New York City.

The purchaser took the show to Indianapolis, Indiana where an auction sale was held at the Union Stock Yards on November 24, 1911. A catalogue was published listing the equipment of the "Dan Robinson Show."

The listing in the auction catalogue included the following: two horse tents, each 35 by 60 feet; one dining tent 40 by 70; one dressing tent, a 50 with one 35 foot middle; one marquee 30 by 30; one side show tent, a 60 with two 30s; one menagerie tent a 70 with three 40s and a big top, 110 with two 50s and one 40. The wagons included five carved cages; two ticket wagons; three tableau wagons; one bandwagon; one calliope and fourteen baggage wagons. The animals listed were one llama; nine lions; five leopards and two elephants. The rail equipment is listed above. There is no record of the buyers at the auction. An article in the *Billboard* stating that Fiss, Doerr & Carroll had purchased the show for a reported \$39,000 in March of 1911, indicating they may have taken an interest in the show as payment for providing the baggage stock.

Following the 1911 season, Bunk started having physical problems with a peripheral vascular disorder. At age 53, he went into semi retirement in his three story home in an exclusive neighborhood at 4000 West Grand Boulevard, Chicago. He steadily went downhill as arteriosclerosis complicated his poor physical condition. Following a year of intense suffering, he died in his recently occupied smaller home at 15 South Leavitt, Chicago, September 15, 1912.

According to his *Chicago Inter Ocean* obituary, he made the following statement to his wife, Buckskin, shortly before his final breath: "There's a fifty note under my pillow. Buy a drink for the fellows and when I'm planted, pour some of that bubbly wine on my grave. Never mind sending for a sky pilot."

A large assemblage of people from all walks of life attended the funeral. Pallbearers included John M. Smyth and Bunk's three nephews. Burial took place in Waldheim cemetery in Forest Park on Chicago's far west side.

The *Inter Ocean* obituary also stated: "Bunk Allen is dead. The name itself is dishonest, as neither the first or last was his. The first was a description — the last a suggestion. Few men of Chicago's underworld, in which he was the shining light for nearly half a century, had more native shrewdness in escaping embarrassing entanglements with the police than Allen. It will be a long time before we see another like him."

In addition to cited references, the following contributed information and material for the above article: Dan Draper, Robert Parkinson, Don Francis, John F. Polacsek, Tom Parkinson, William Metzger, Fred Dahlinger, Chicago Historical Society and the Circus World Museum Library and Research Center.

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May 18,	Pontiac, Ill.	20
May 19,	Streator, Ill.	38
May 20,	Braidwood, Ill.	25
Sunday May 21,		
May 22,	Lockport, Ill.	97
May 23,	Chillicothe, Ill.	48
May 24,	Galesburg, Ill.	40
May 25,	Canton, Ill.	84
May 26,	Winchester, Ill.	69
May 27,	Rushville, Ill.	36
	Sunday, May 28	
May 29,	Bushnell, Ill.	—

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